

# RAZZORCAKE

ISSUE 104 \$4 U.S.

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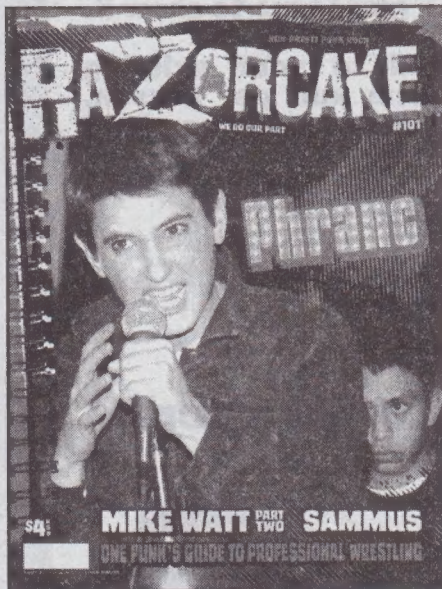
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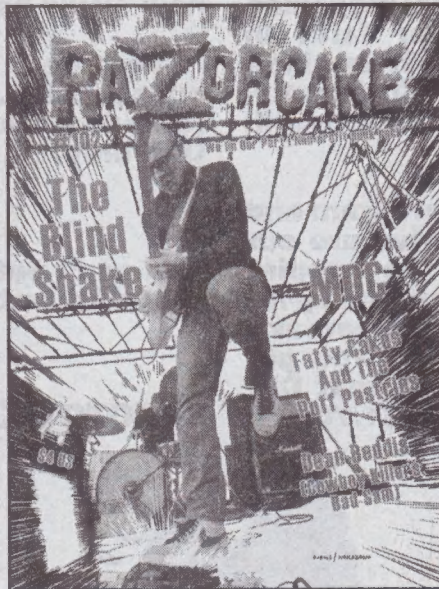
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ARE

**RAZORCAKE** is a magazine dedicated to DIY punk, independent culture, and amplifying unheard voices. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, we're sustained by subscriptions, donations, advertisements, and grants. We want to create something that people can be proud to be a part of. We feel when we work together, life is a little more bearable. On one side is a terrifying culture of manipulation, and on the other side are all of us.

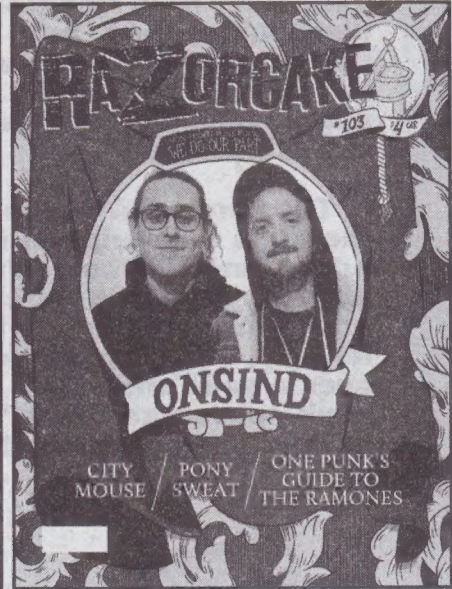
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If you don't see who or what you'd like to be in our pages, lend us a helping hand. If you're knowledgeable about DIY punk, are open to the editing of your work, can meet deadlines, and follow instructions, we'll consider your contribution. Flip through these pages and visit [razorcake.org](http://razorcake.org). We have immediate openings for interviews, feature-length articles, podcasts, photos, comics, web columns, videos, reviews, and editorial illustrations. All creative content is done on a volunteer basis. Razorcake does not tolerate racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or ableist bullshit—and we've held these ethics since issue #1 in 2001. Diversity makes us a better punk publication, which is why we're encouraging people who are marginalized—by gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, personal experience—to submit material to Razorcake. Join a group that's passionate about DIY punk and let's work with each other.

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## Standing at the Mouth of...

The Auschwitz-Birkenau complex is massive, just shy of 500 acres. Over one million people were murdered there (600,000 Jews in 1944 alone).

It was a sobering trip, seeing the preserved ruins of crematoria stacks the Nazis hastily blew up trying to erase their crimes against humanity before being overrun. Contemplating the twisted rebar and scattered bricks, I thought of industrial setups I'm familiar with, like heavy freight moved through San Pedro's docks. Only this was for genocide. The attempted eradication of a race, a central European hub for the decimation of populations. Horrible efficiency. Grave logistics. Warehouses of shaved-off human hair.

Who doesn't want to know where they come from, what their homeland is? I'm half Polish and I'd never been to Poland. My family history on that side is blurry. This much I know: my great-grandmother's family on my mother's side were bakers in Krakow and my paternal great-grandfather was a farmer who lived in a village that no longer exists. What my family still doesn't know is what our last name was before landing at Ellis Island and it being changed to Doman.

Poland's history over the past hundred years is largely grim. Occupations by the Nazis and Soviets, a re-carving of its borders at the whim of Stalin, martial law as recently as 1983. Savagely repressed rebellions. The Poland that my partner Jennifer and I visited was different. The eighty-five percent of Warsaw that had been bombed during WWII was largely rebuilt (and oddly reminded me of Las Vegas, where newish buildings like The Venetian are intentionally made to look a lot older than they are). Yet, when we visited the Praga district, across the Vistula River, I saw another too-familiar sight: construction cranes and the beginning scratch marks of gentrification on a traditionally overlooked part of the city that's about to get flipped on its head and shaken down by monied forces.

I'm unbelievably fortunate to come from a family that accepts me for who I am and loves me. We're a small, tight-knit group. Maybe that's why I've never done a deep look into my family's past and celebrated some of those traditions. I am third-generation American.

Jennifer and I had a wonderful vacation, but did I feel any deep connection? Like Poland was my homeland, I'd finally reconnected with my people, and an essential piece of my heritage clicked into place? No, I didn't. Were there delicious lentil pierogi, vegan kebab, and potato latkes to be eaten? Indeed there were. To be honest, I feel mostly like a Taylor, not part of a larger ethnic group. And as corny as this may sound, I also feel like a DIY punk rocker. It's how I've self-identified since 1986. By having this open pocket for cultural traditions, I've made connections to my closest friends, their varied cultural histories, and the celebrations and remembrances woven into their everyday with extended families. I embrace it, to the point of when Razorcake turned fifteen, I wore a banging dress for our Quinceañera.

Standing on the railroad tracks, looking into the haunted mouth of an entrance to Auschwitz II, the sadness continued. Yes, the Nazis were defeated and people are remembering the Holocaust, but it's foolhardy to think there haven't been genocides since, that they're not happening now. Too often, change is violent, hatred is masked as progress, and ethnicity is still used as a bludgeon. International capitalism is often another form of erasure. Against these forces, we're gnats, inconsequential specks.

I thought further, beyond flags and borders, beyond atrocities and empires, and held Jennifer's hand. At least I have families by blood and friendship. I have that and more, and that's worth remembering.

—Todd Taylor

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On their  
shoulders they  
carried a keg of  
ancient anger,  
lit with a recent  
fuse.

—Arundhati Roy  
*The God of Small Things*

Traditional  
Polish  
holiday  
celebration  
costume.



photo by  
Jennifer Federico while at  
the Ethnographic Museum,  
Krakow

**THANK YOU:** A former hand model joins an existing wedding band that got complimented by a guest who said, "I saw The Who last night and you guys were better" thanks to Kevin and Raul of Calimucho for the design and Nicole C. Kibert Basler for the photograph of the mighty Caves on the cover; It's the mediocrity of familiarity vs. true qualifications which institutionalized discrimination breeds that fucking sucks thanks to Bone Dust for Donna's illo.; Whoa, Mark was there when the bottle clink / "come out and play" scene in The Warriors was filmed thanks to Bill for Jim's illo.; Some smartie needs to invent a record player that plays multiple records at one go, doesn't bung up the vinyl and is truly reasonably priced thanks to Alex Barrett for Nerb's illo.; Orwell would be proud, Biafra was right, and ten dollar tacos are dystopian harbingers thanks to Michelle Cruz Gonzales for her guest column and Sue Ann Carney for the photo; Six-legged abuelito and maracas thanks to Humberto Howard for the Puro Pinche Poetry illo.; Unsanitary poultry conditions! Use gloves when handling thanks to Kasia Oniszczuk for the Rhythm Chicken photo; RIP Neil Boland, thanks to Shane Milner for Dale's illo.; Mike Watt, fairy godmother of Ergs! van repair thanks to Steve Thueson for Jeff Schroeck's guest column illo.; "Laugh between screams of rage," thanks to David Ensminger, Vera Hernandez, and Jesse Zerexed for The Elected Officials interview, photos, and layout; "It's the human condition—if we didn't laugh, we'd be crying," thanks to Mike Plante and Marcos Siref for the One Punk's Movie Guide and illo.; "Yeah, just be nice to each other," humility, grace, and badassery thanks to Kayla Greet, Nicole C. Kibert Basler, and Eric Baskauskas for the Caves interview, photos, and layout; "The most affirming thing you could hear is to have other teenage girls say, 'I saw your band so now I'm in a band,'" thanks to John Ensley, Darin Kamnetz, Caitlin Connery, Mark Neibuhr, and Dylan Davis for the Kitten Forever interview, photos, and layout.

"Simultaneously a total banger and chill as fuck." —Indiana Laub, Bruiser Queen, Heavy High LP. Thanks to 104's rotation of zines, books, and music reviewers: Mark Twistworthy, Anna Farr, Ryan Nichols, Sal Lucci, Michael T. Fournier, Matt Werts, Bryan Static, Ty Stranglehold, Rich Cocksedge, Kayla Greet, Nerb, Keith Rossen, Mike Frame, Kurt Morris, Chad Williams, Indiana Laub, Chris Terry, Steve Adamyk, Sean Koepenick, Camille Reynolds, Matt Average, Juan Espinosa, Sean Arenas, Billups Allen, Theresa W., Art Ettinger, Ian Wise, Paul J. Comeau, Matt Seward, Tim Brooks, The Lord Kveldulfr, Jimmy Alvarado, Adrian Salas, Chris Terry, Jim Joyce, Tricia Ramos, and Craven Rock.

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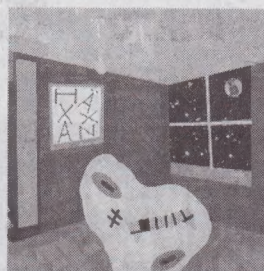
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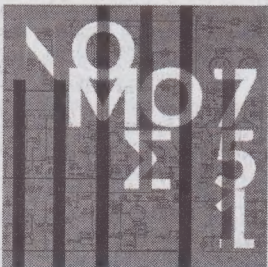
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THE HAND JOBS



# RAZORCAKE

Issue #104 June / July 2018

This issue is dedicated to the memories of  
Beth Zafranovic and Julie "Jules" Keskin-Lanfeld

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The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, Razorcake wouldn't be what it is.

Todd Taylor, Daryl Gussin, Kari Hamanaka, Rishbha Bhagi, Ever Velasquez, Nicole Macias, Donna Ramone, Matthew Hart, Derek "Language immersion app. with a library card" Whipple, Chris Baxter, Dayna Castillo, Steve Couch, Megan Pants, Marcos Siref, Candice Tobin, Griffin Wynne, Seth Swaaley, Sean Carswell, Felizon Vidad, Skinny Dan, Katy Spining, Jimmy Alvarado, Yvonne Drazan, Dale Drazan, Josh Rosa, Robert El Diablo, Mark McBride, Alice Bag, Marty Ploy, Rachel Murray Framingheddu, Rene Navarro, Billy Kostka III, Samantha McBride, Jason Willis, Janeth Galaviz, Matt Average, Joe Dana, Juan Espinosa, Meztli Hernandez, Sean Arenas, Adrian Salas, Adrian Chi, Aaron Kovacs, Julia Smut, Jenn Witte, Dave Eck, Tim Burkert, Jeff Proctor, Nighthawk, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Jennifer Federico, Kevin Dunn, Maggie Egan, Jennifer Whiteford, Kayla Greet, Steve Thueson, Cassie J. Snider, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Laura Collins, Eric Baskauskas, Bianca, Russ Van Cleave, John Di Marco, Michael T. Fournier, Simon Sotelo, Susan de Place, Timothee de Place, Bryan Static, John Miskelly, Genesis Bautista, Andy Garcia, Camylle Reynolds, Becky Bennett, Craven Rock, Replay Dave, Adam Ali, Chris Devlin, Emma Johnson, Tim Brooks, Patrick Houdek, Louis Jacinto, Chris Boarts Larson, J.V. McDonough, Isaac Thotz, Kat Jetson, Noah Wolf, Jon Mule, Chris Terry, Jackie Rusted, Rosie Gonc, Rick V., Scotty McMaster, Rayne Blakeman, James Kittlekamp, Jeff Khan, Punky Bowen, Sam Grinberg, Melanie Matranga, Elly Dallas, Ricky Vigil, Ollie Mikso, Art Fuentes, Mitch Clem, Dylan Davis, Becky Minjarez, Keith Rosson, Megan Razzetti, Paul Silver, Matt Werts, Stacy Medina, David Ensminger, Danny Rust, Clara Acosta, Jamie L. Rotante, Daisy Naomi, George Lopez, Eden Kittiver, Shelby Fujioka, Jesse Zeroxed, Alice Elmer, Garrett Barnwell, Sal Go, Nørb, Chris Mason, Tim Jamison, Cody Richards, Amina Cruz, Kiyoshi Nakazawa, Nicole X, Shane Milner, James Rosario, Michelle Kirk, Rorey J. Sotela, and Josh Brown.

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Enriching Lives



This issue of *Razorcake* is made possible in part by grants from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs, is supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles Arts Commission, and has activities funded by the California Arts Council, a state agency.





**Racism in professional environments is my guillotine.**

# Mediocre White Women or Career Suicide: Being Brown in the Workplace

"I love your glasses. Green is my second-favorite color. My favorite is mustard," she said, motioning to her mustard-colored purse and cardigan.

The white woman I was interviewing for a coveted full-time, benefited position at the university library I work for sincerely thought a good ice breaker would be telling me what her basic-ass favorite colors were.

She had some experience, already working in another university library part-time for five years, but that was it. She has no new talents to offer us, no new perspective, no problem-solving skills, no technological knowledge, nothing. I couldn't even see any hustle or fierceness.

We also interviewed a Japanese man. He was impeccably dressed, bright and inquisitive, worked at the central university library for twenty years, had a background in art, engineering, and software. I spent the next month silently fighting my white co-workers when they consistently claimed the two candidates were equals and couldn't pick who to hire.

The hiring committee for the position consisted of me and two white women. Out of the fifty-ish employees at my library, there are four people of color, myself included. Librarians, according to demographic studies by the American Library Association, are 87% white and 81% female. Libraries do not fucking need another white woman, especially when the much better candidate for the position is an Asian man.

The reason why these two candidates were somehow being debated would have been much more confusing if it wasn't for what my colleague said as we discussed Ms. Mustard post-interview. "I really like her, she seems like someone I could talk to and be friends with."

When I pointed out she's not someone I would be friends with—the nerdy Asian man into art and tech is the kind of people I'm generally surrounded by—she was so visibly shocked, I felt myself get offended. For the first time, I was on the other side of the table and I didn't know how to voice my disagreement. This is how racism in the workplace thrives, this is why people of color can't get jobs even when they're more qualified in a thousand different ways, and this is the only place where I am too scared to point out the prejudice happening right in front of me.

The back and forth went all the way up to the library director, another white woman, who would make the hiring decision for us. She told everyone, without any hesitation, that years ago she had had a director who was forced to make a similar decision and that director gave her advice she's never forgotten: If you have two good candidates, pick the more diverse one. I was relieved and wondered if I had also been hired because I was once being weighed against a mediocre white woman and just barely nudged by.

Getting a decent job has always been the hardest thing for me to accomplish. Any time I have ended up unemployed, I felt like I might never get the chance to pursue a career again. It's why I moved to Utah of all places—because I got a job that paid me eighteen dollars per hour, which is still the most money I have ever made in my life. It's painful being aware that I was losing to mediocre white people constantly. Racism in professional environments is my guillotine, where one wrong move might get me axed.

Recently, someone I know through punk met one of my co-workers. When the obvious, "How do you know Donna?" came up, she said, "She's dating my ex."

Is that factual? Yes. Is that a shitty, sexist way to describe someone when you're in a professional setting? Fuck, yes, it is. I was fucking livid. Not because she said something dumb that's permissible banter among friends and not the workplace, but because that could very well fuck me over in my current job. When white people have affairs, it wins Oscars. When brown woman date white men, they're the evil temptress who has led our brave hero away from his true love, the pure white woman. In the obstacle course between myself and my career, there are hundreds of hurdles and her errant statement tossed another one in there. I always assume white punks are my kin, or at least know better than to do or say this stuff, but they can't experience the world the way I do. Racism is a flaming hoop I jump through several times a day; she's just in the audience of this circus.

Having a conversation with another, older white woman co-worker a couple weeks ago, I congratulated her on finishing her law degree this semester. Venting about school she said, "I'm so tired of hearing about 'the intersection of gender and race' or 'othering' or whatever new buzzword is happening—it's like that's what my entire degree is in,

that's all they kept saying. It's like you're bad for just being white." She was just letting out school woes to a friend, never thinking that perhaps this education she was receiving was there to help said friend get a little taste of her equality. My inappropriate, knee-jerk reaction was to clap back and say, "Yeah, but some people *are* bad because they're white."

I wish the whole conversation had gone differently and I could have talked it out better. I wish I had pointed out that I am the intersection of gender and race. I am othered for being Muslim. She's not bad for being white, but she *is* bad for not listening and getting fatigued when academia is trying to teach her why thinking, "I'm not racist, I'm friends with Donna" isn't enough. Is it worth all my emotional labor, though? Would she have my back any more or less if someone said we needed to ban Muslims? I don't know.

White people don't have flawless, easy lives. We all have problems and setbacks. But white people don't have to also worry about the added problem of institutional racism. Systematic racism doesn't *cause* any of their problems. Here is an example I like to use: I have very big, very curly, very frizzy hair. This is my natural hair, as it grows out of my beautiful head. If I take a shower, air dry, and head to a job interview I will not get that job because my natural hair is considered very unprofessional in white America. If any white woman shows up to that job interview with green hair, her hair wouldn't eliminate her at all (in libraries, especially). In 2018, green hair is more acceptable in the workplace than natural POC hair.

Another co-worker, when describing how strict the religious private college he attended said, "It was so awful, it was like the Middle East." I blinked a few times, took a deep breath, and reacted differently. I decided to turn this into a teaching moment. "I'm in the Middle East all the time and I've never had a single one of those restrictions." Of five Middle Eastern countries I have been to, I have never dealt with curfews, food restrictions, dress codes, or the idea I would be expelled from the country if multiple genders mingled behind closed doors. He, admittedly, had never been anywhere near the Middle East. I asked him to tell me why he thought the Middle East was strict and he managed to tell me it was based on stories from his friend from Sudan. Cool—except Sudan is a totalitarian country dealing with





BONE DUST

## At least when I walk into interviews I have more to say about myself than my favorite fucking color.

a civil war and genocide, not to mention is in *Africa*. We all think we know places we have never visited because of popular media portrayal. I've never been to Italy, but I think every café there has a better cup of coffee than anything I can get at home. But that's not true at all, why the hell do I assume that? Fellini movies, probably.

There is no place harder to navigate and approach these topics than where we work, but it's also the one place where the institutional, systematic racism is stabbing at us nonstop. For every micro aggression I call out, I run the risk of my co-worker labeling me as angry. When women of color get labeled as "angry," it's over. Several years ago, I had put myself in financial and emotional debt for my dream career, and I was finally making it. Then my manager

told everyone I had "anger issues" because I listened to punk music and had brown skin. I found out I was going to get fired when I saw my job show up as an unpaid internship on Craigslist. I resigned before they could. She told everyone I was "dangerous" after I confronted her for being a coward and a liar. They believed the white woman, they didn't fight for me. No one even wished me well as I left.

Nearly thirty-five years I've lived in this brown body, and in nearly thirty-five years I have learned everything I could get my hands on. I have two bachelor's degrees, and I'm in grad school now. I've had three different careers blossom and wither. I moved away from my friends and family for the promise of opportunity. I've given free labor to any institution

that would have me so I would hopefully turn that experience into paid work. I'm versed in every piece of software I could pirate. I practice my posture, speech, and handwriting. I blow-dry and flat iron my un-dyed hair. I've had food jobs, I've had desk jobs, I've had shit jobs, I've had cool jobs. All the effort I put in, I know I have to hustle for a career because white America doesn't like Arab faces. I hustle because I want that career, any career, that will put bread in my mouth and a roof over my head. A career I can finally call mine.

It's getting closer, but I'm still not there yet. But at least when I walk into interviews I have more to say about myself than my favorite fucking color.

—Donna Ramone





# LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

I'm intimate  
with the feeling  
of reckless  
joy and biting  
cynicism.

## On Location The Neon Ones, Part 7

While my cousin Mark was studying film at NYU, he supplemented his income by writing for movie magazines, a practice he continued for many years.

I returned from a trip to Mark's hometown of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, earlier this year with precious cargo: a packet of magazines and zines from the 1970s to which he contributed articles and interviews.

I'd been thinking about Mark's legacy for decades—and writing about him here in *Razorcake* for a year—and now I would have an opportunity to read his thoughts about the movie business in his own words.

The magazine Mark wrote for most often was *Millimeter*. It called itself "the magazine for and about film and videotape people." *Millimeter* had a glossy cover and newsprint pages with black and white photos and ads, not unlike *Razorcake*. It was not a zine, however. It was professionally published, albeit amateurishly, and featured industry advertising, but it was zine-like in the way it addressed a core audience that was passionate about movies.

The first of these stories was an interview with Brian De Palma that appeared in 1974. This was two years before the release of *Carrie* and almost a decade before *Scarface*.

The subject of the interview was *The Phantom of the Paradise*, a campy rock opera take on *Phantom of the Opera*. What's most striking about the piece is my cousin's age: he was only nineteen years old when the story ran. Yet, here he is sitting down with the soon-to-be-legendary Brian De Palma.

The following year Mark was off to London to interview the filmmaker Lindsay Anderson on the set of *Celebration*. Despite having been warned Anderson was a prickly subject who had brought at least one reporter to tears, Mark showed up at the set with his camera, tape recorder, and notebook. After waiting for an hour-and-a-half, he got his interview. Not only did he win over Anderson with his erudition, but Anderson permitted Mark to take photos, one of which I believe ended up on the cover of the January 1975 edition (the photo isn't credited). Whether it was his photo or not, he'd gotten a cover story at the age of twenty.

Later that year he wrote a lengthy profile of Stanley Kubrick that takes up eleven pages of *Millimeter*'s real estate. But "In Search of Stanley K" isn't just a profile. It begins with

the story of Mark's failed endeavor to make a documentary about the famously secretive director. In it he lays out his methodology for the project. After assembling a list of interview subjects, he spent two months reaching out to people. He even ran an ad in *Variety* for several weeks in order to talk to more people. He secured agreements from a former schoolteacher, the writer Terry Southern, and the actor Slim Pickens, but Kubrick and his production company remained elusive.

After "fielding several angry calls" by the staff of Kubrick's then current project, *Barry Lyndon*, Mark abandoned the documentary and used his sources to compose the profile. Although he must have been discouraged, the article reveals someone who is ambitious, determined, and resourceful.

In the opening paragraphs of his piece, another cover story for *Millimeter*, Mark uses a quote from Kubrick that strikes me as exceptionally dark: "Man isn't a noble savage; he's an ignoble savage. He is irrational, brutal, weak, silly and unable to be objective about anything where his own interests are involved—that about sums it up. I'm interested in the brutal and violent nature of man, because it's a true picture of him."

When the profile ran in December 1975, Mark had just turned twenty-one. He couldn't have known it yet, but he was at the midpoint of life, which ended with a brutal and violent death in a motel room by his own hand.

What is the true picture of Mark's life? I refuse to allow the circumstances of his death eclipse his work. This project is nothing less than an attempt to change the narrative.

\*

The December 1976 issue of *Millimeter* features Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* on the cover. Mark has a piece in the back of the issue called "Incident with a Taxi Driver."

Mark recalls a visit to Sixty-third Street and Broadway where Scorsese was shooting. While visiting the set he exchanged glances with Robert De Niro, whom my cousin recognized as his cab driver three months earlier, while going to see a Martin Scorsese film, of all things. Apparently, De Niro prepared for his role by working as a New York hack.

Did Mark invent this scene? Was he striving to establish a connection with someone

where none existed? It's tempting to think so, but I'm inclined to doubt it. My cousin was already on a first name basis with Scorsese (he refers to him as "Marty"). He was a serious person who wanted to be taken seriously and it comes through in his interviews, particularly those that take place on set. He was passionate and prepared. If he wanted to demonstrate that he belonged on the set he would have done so through his professionalism, and not with a fabricated story about a chance encounter with an actor.

By 1978, *Millimeter* had expanded from a sixty-page publication with a staple in the center to 148 pages with perfect binding. Mark was now writing for one of the magazine's columns, "On Location." I don't know how many of these he wrote, but I've only got two.

In the first of these, September 1978, Mark ventures to Pier 12 of the Brooklyn docks to interview Michael Winner, best known for the *Death Wish* movies (although *The Mechanic* is my personal favorite of his). Their interview takes place on the set of *Firepower*, a James Coburn vehicle.

The interview is fairly forgettable but what impresses me is Mark's watchful eye and attention to detail. He's familiar with all of the equipment and his writing is peppered with jargon. While it's true he's writing for film professionals, not fans, I can't help but get the sense that Mark is treating these set visits as mini internships. He's clearly trying to absorb everything he can during his time on the set. While he notes the scrum of activity that follows Coburn's arrival, Mark is more interested in the technical side of things. It's almost as if he's preparing for a time when he's in charge. This begs a question: did Mark want to direct?

\*

Reading Mark's column for the December 1978 issue of *Millimeter*, I know I've stumbled upon a gold mine.

For his latest installment of "On Location," Mark ventured out to Coney Island to where Walter Hill was directing *The Warriors*.

Many years later, when Mark was being interviewed by the horror movie magazine *Fangoria* on the set of his movie *Neon Maniacs*, Mark revealed the influence of *The Warriors* on his screenplay. In





BILL PINKEL

## What is the true picture of Mark's life? I refuse to allow the circumstances of his death eclipse his work.

his conception, *Neon Maniacs* was a supernatural gang movie with a gang of maniacs from another dimension.

This was a critical revelation because in the movie, the maniacs' origins—or even their purpose—is never discussed. They are simply there. Clues are given as to where they hide out under the Golden Gate Bridge, but it's not revealed until the final frame that this lair is actually some kind of portal to another place, or dimension, or even hell. It's not really clear, which, sadly, makes watching Mark's first film a less-than-satisfying viewing experience.

Which is a shame, because there is an origin story, though perhaps not one that moviegoers will appreciate. Growing up in Bay Ridge, Mark watched the construction of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge at the southwestern tip of Brooklyn. It is the bridge that will, for better or worse, connect Brooklyn and Staten Island. It is the bridge that will, for better or worse, cement the film *Saturday Night Fever* in Bay Ridge lore.

But on the Brooklyn side, underneath a bridge, sits a pyramid-shaped support that fascinated Mark. As he watched it being built, he imagined that it served as a conduit to hell, or some other dark place, from which fantastic creatures might emerge.

He made those dreams into a kind of shimmering reality in *Neon Maniacs*, a dream that dissipated when the producers decided to

move the movie's setting from Brooklyn to San Francisco.

But knowing Mark had visited the set of *The Warriors* thrills me. His opinions about *The Warriors* were well-earned: prior to visiting Hill's set he'd read the screenplay Hill wrote with David Schaber as well as the novel by Sol Yurick from which it was adapted.

"*The Warriors*," Mark declares "is actually a western in the guise of an urban action drama, with the cityscapes standing in for the plains of the American West and the rival gangs standing in for the warring Indian tribes."

Mark goes on to describe an action sequence being filmed. "A dark hearse, old, battle-scarred, with three members of The Rogues, cruises Surf Avenue, past boarded-up hot dog stands and vacant hotels in search of Warriors."

This is the famous: "Warriors... Come out to play..." scene. Mark records Hill's reaction as well as the crew's response to the eerie call from the dilapidated hearse. They had something special, they all knew it, and Mark was there to witness it.

\*

While reading these articles and interviews, I catch glimpses of myself: waiting outside of a club for a band to show up

for an interview, getting the run around from gatekeepers, and traveling great distances for the sake of a story, wondering if anyone will even read it, much less care.

I've put my energy into projects that went nowhere or came to fruition only to be rejected. Often those things that do get published are ignored, which is somehow worse.

I'm intimate with the feeling of reckless joy and biting cynicism that comes with working on a project I suspect has only me for an audience.

To be perfectly honest, this project often feels like that.

Sometimes I lay in bed at night admonishing myself for not being talented enough to make this as compelling for you as it is for me. I know that is a foolish metric. After all, you aren't the one who never told Mark you loved him. You haven't enlisted in a campaign for a lifelong liberation from regret.

Knowing that Mark witnessed so many movies being made makes me appreciate him even more. I'll never be able to watch *Taxi Driver* or *The Warriors* again without thinking of Mark standing in the shadows like a ghost.

—Jim Ruland



# ASIAN GOTH PUNKS RULE *the* WORLD!



Starring:

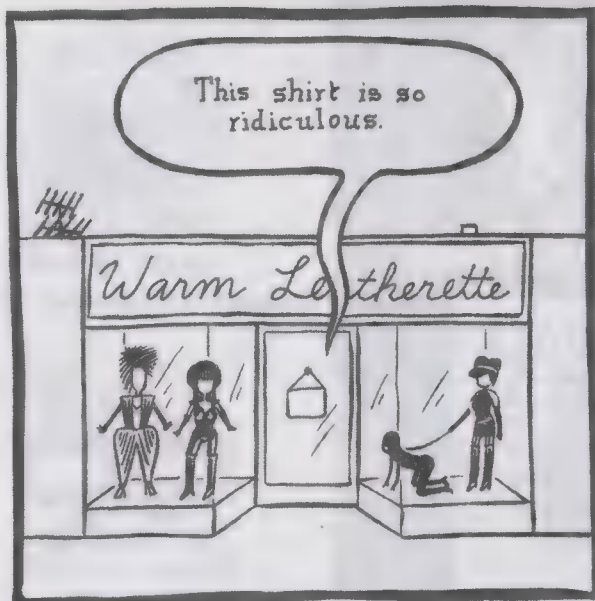
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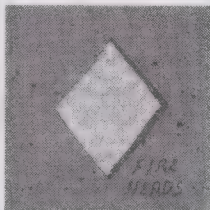
BY MARINAOMI











**FIRE HEADS**

(Madison, garage, punk, smackdowns)



**WOOD CHICKENS**

Meat Puppets meet the Minutemen!



**SEGER LIBERATION ARMY- LP**

Tom Potter and ~~GROW~~ are back with an LP's worth of Seger System favorites!



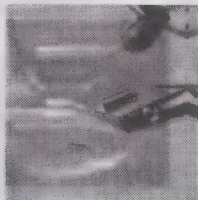
**THE HUSSY**

I See Just Fine EP  
The Hussy's first record in two years!

**COMING SOON**



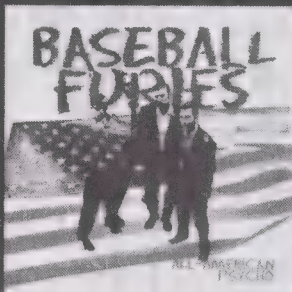
White Savage



Sweet JAP

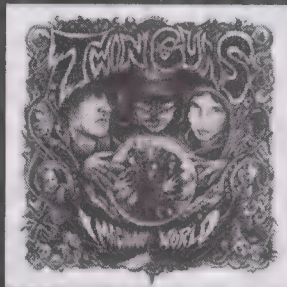


**NOW AVAILABLE**



**BASEBALL FURIES**

All American Psycho



**TWIN GUNS - LP**



**GALLERY NIGHT**

Big Neck Records

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Leesburg, VA 20175

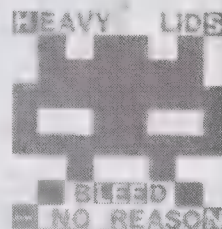
[bigneckrecords.com](http://bigneckrecords.com)

[bigneckrecords@usa.net](mailto:bigneckrecords@usa.net)



**SWEET KNIVES**

(Psssst...Lost Sounds Reboot)



**HEAVY LIDS**

Bleed Me EP

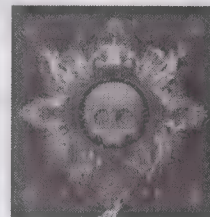
Scum, Sci Fi, Punk from New Orleans



**FIRE RETARDED -**

Scroggz Manor LP/CD

Featuring Bobby Hussy from the Hussy, stoned, garage, fuzzed out, punk, rock!



**HEAVY PSYCH ROCK**

Trio from Dublin, Ireland.

**COMING SOON**

Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb

Richard Vain-Ex-Ponys

Gino and the Goons

Facility Men

Wood Chickens



A RETROSPECTIVE OF MY  
FAVORITE

HALLOWEEN  
COSTUMES



I'M OBVIOUSLY A HUGE FAN  
OF THE MISFITS, AND PLAYED  
IN A LOT OF HALLOWEEN COVER  
BANDS AS...



JERRY ONLY

...AND ONCE AS THE  
SINGER



GLENN DANZIG

ANOTHER FAVORITE SINGER  
I DRESSED AS...



KING DIAMOND

I'VE ALSO ENJOYED  
DRESSING UP AS MOVIE  
CHARACTERS



SWEET THE LEG JOHNNY

EVEN NON-SPECIFIC ONES.



A BASEBALL FURY

AND ONCE (WHEN I HAD  
BEEN EATING A LOT OF  
LSD)...



A GUY THAT LIVES  
THE CONE HEADS

SPEAKING OF DRUGS, ONE  
YEAR I WAS A CREECH  
AND CHONG CHARACTER



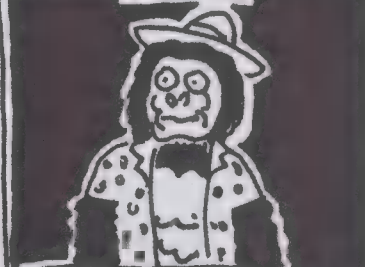
EDDIE TORRES, THE  
EXTRA TESTICLE

AND AS A HUGE STAR  
TREK FAN, AN OBVIOUS  
ONE



WOLF, SON OF MOGH

SOMETIMES IT'S FUN TO  
JUST BE SOMETHING  
SILLY...



A GORILLA ON  
VACATION

...OR SOMETHING SCIENTIFIC



TYCHO BRAHE

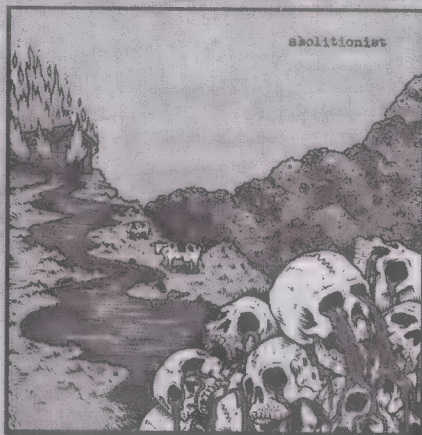
I ALREADY HAVE MY NEXT  
COSTUME PLANNED OUT...



THE "WE WIN" GUY FROM  
THE OPENING CREDITS OF  
"CHEERS"



# ABOLITIONIST

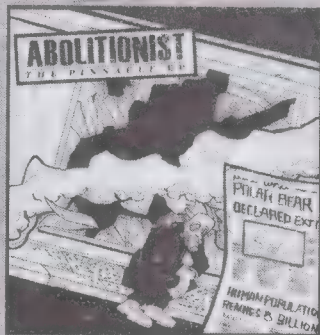


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"THE PINNACLE" 7" EP

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FUCK OFF!

NAZI TRUMPS FUCK OFF! TEE

Unisex SM - 2XL

LADIES FITS: SM - 2XL

DEMOCRACY



WE DELIVER

DEMOCRACY WE DELIVER TEE

Unisex SM - 2XL

LADIES FITS: SM - 2XL



DEAD ENDING

"SHOOT THE MESSENGER"



FROM ALL OVERFLOWING

"FROM ALL OVERFLOWING"



WINBAT TEE

Unisex SM - 2XL

LADIES FITS: SM - 2XL



AT BAT LOGO TEE

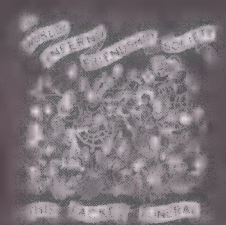
Unisex SM - 2XL

LADIES FITS: SM - 2XL



ARMOCORPS

"THE UNCLE SAM"



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"THIS PACKED FUNERAL"



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**I WATCHED THE FIRST EPISODE OF *REN & STIMPY* BACK IN 1991.** It was a cartoon that blew my twenty-year-old mind. The premise was not a new one and the cartoon itself was funny, but what really did it for me was the wild, frenetic, and sometimes grotesque art style the show was drawn in. It was like nothing I'd ever seen before! That day I vowed I would one day work for the creator of this crazed cartoon show, John K.

Flash forward to 2005. Through the wonder of the internet, I got to know John Kricfalusi pretty well. He commented on drawings I posted to my blog and offered tips and instruction. I couldn't believe it! My hero took an interest in my art and helped me hone my abilities. He saw my raw potential and knew he could make it into something great. He invited me to his parties where I got to meet a bunch of other great cartoonists, many of whom are still good friends of mine. This could have been the extent of my relationship with John K., and I would have "died happy."

My ultimate dream came true when he asked me in 2006 to work and train with him at his home studio. I was flabbergasted and honored to work at Spumco. I'd heard stories John was a taskmaster, and those stories were true. He pushed me to the limit of my ability, then asked for more. There were days when I really didn't like him, but then he'd compliment one of my drawings and I'd forget about the criticisms and endless re-draws of the day before. Such was his charisma. To be in John's circle was to be enthralled

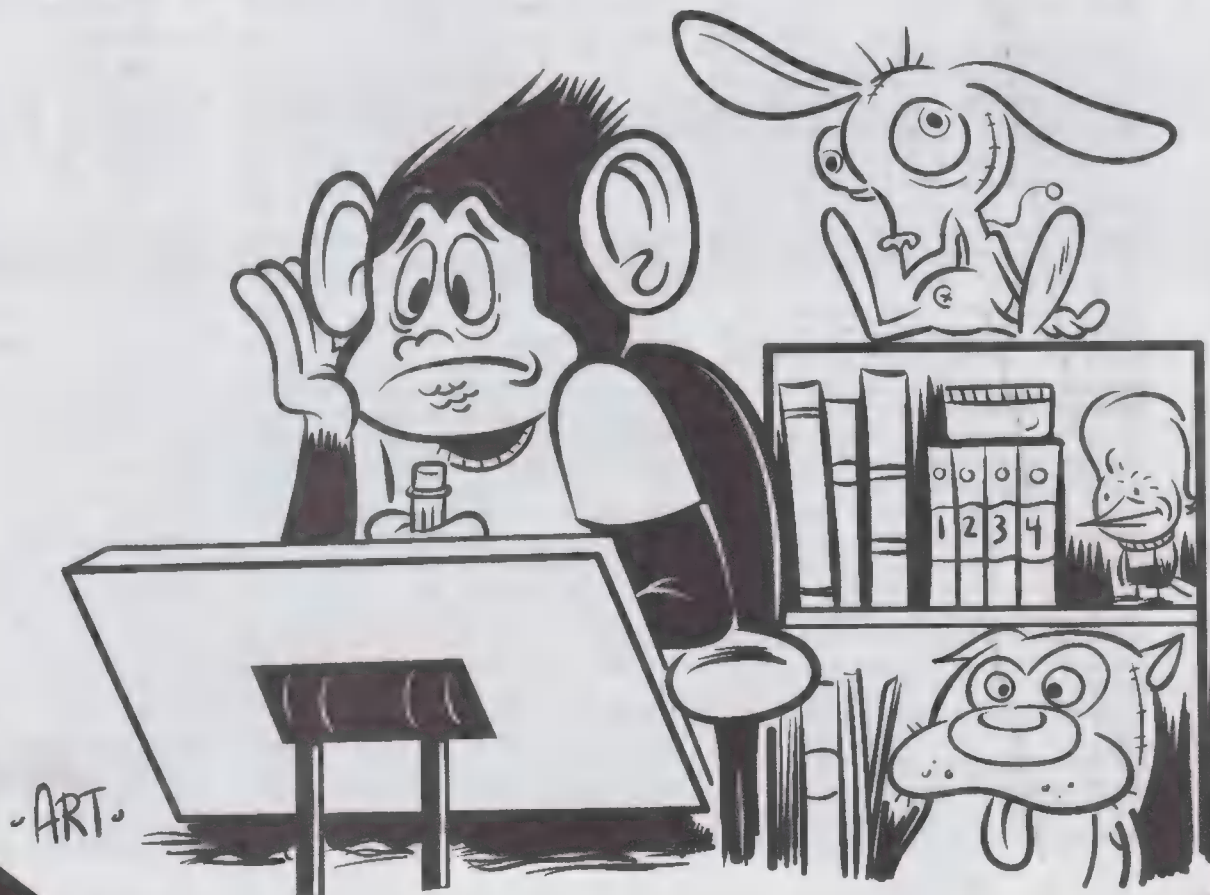
by him. Being in that circle opened doors, even for a new cartoonist like myself.

On March 29 2018, two former Spumco animators brought forth allegations of sexual abuse and harassment against John. As I read the online article, my stomach churned. The allegations described a horrible and heinous, and I believe them wholeheartedly. John's reputation for hiring (and dating) cute, talented young lady cartoonists was already common knowledge at this point, and when I was there, his girlfriend had just graduated from Otis School of Design. I thought it was slightly creepy, but they were both consenting adults, their relationship wasn't any of my business, and again, she was a young woman. This article revealed a side of John I had no idea existed, and I'm disgusted, appalled, and disappointed.

I've been struggling with my feelings about this whole situation. I owe John a hell of a lot. I can honestly say I wouldn't have a great number of my skills without his help and guidance. But how do I square that with these abuse allegations? How can I say I admire him as a mentor, when, to me, he's the worst type of monster? I've been explaining my time at Spumco to a lot of people this past week, reassuring them that if I had known what had happened—or if I'd seen something wrong—I would have immediately reported it.

Working for and training with John used to be a badge of honor for me, now it just makes me feel dirty.

—Art Fuentes







Youthful  
musical  
democracy  
in action.

# THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SPINDLE

When I was a kid, our stereo used to have a spindle. I mean, a *real* spindle, a thin metal pole about four inches high, smack dab in the center of the turntable. One perched ■ album at the top of the spindle—where it wobbled, suspended, like a particularly circular Flying Wallenda—and rotated an arm contraption over the record, securing it in place, high over the turntable. If one was of a mind to, one could add ■ second album before bringing the ■■■ over to secure the stack. Then one tweaked a switch, the turntable whirled into action, the bottom album daringly plunged from the top of the spindle to the rotating platter below, the stylus moved by its own accord to the edge of the whirling album, plopped down on the edge of the vinyl, and *presto!* *Ze Rock and Ze Roll!* When the side concluded, the stylus raised and returned to its perch, as if by magic, and the turntable ceased rotation. In the event of a two-album stack, the turntable continued to rotate, the second elpee plunged down atop the first, the stylus re-engaged the vinyl, and the music continued (if you've ever observed that double album sets manufactured up through the 1970s have sides 1 and 4 on one record and sides 2 and 3 on the other, that's not so the side numbers on each record add up to five, thereby keeping the album's bra cup size regular; putting sides 1 and 2 on different pieces of vinyl allowed the listener to hear the first two sides of the album without getting up off one's sofa / La-Z-Boy® / sex partner to flip the record over. Record one dropped, side 1 played, record two dropped, side 2 played. When one got up to flip the stack, side 3 was now conveniently on the bottom, and side 4 on top. With one deft turn, the records could be inverted ■ the spindle, and the process repeated for sides 3 and 4. Put otherwise, one could listen to all four sides of ■ double album and only have to disengage from lethargy (or mad, savvy passion) and walk to the turntable once in the process. That, they tell me, is called *automatic sequence*. So, what's the best double album of the last twenty or thirty years? I dunno that I've really beat the bushes to harvest all possible candidates here, but I'm going to go with my gut and say it's *Sixteen Wires from the New Provocate* by the Registrators. Released in 1998, cursory visual inspection quickly bears out that *Sixteen Wires*, unlike our old-timey model in the previous example, assigns sides 1 and 2 to one record, and sides 3 and 4 to the other. That's called *manual sequence*,

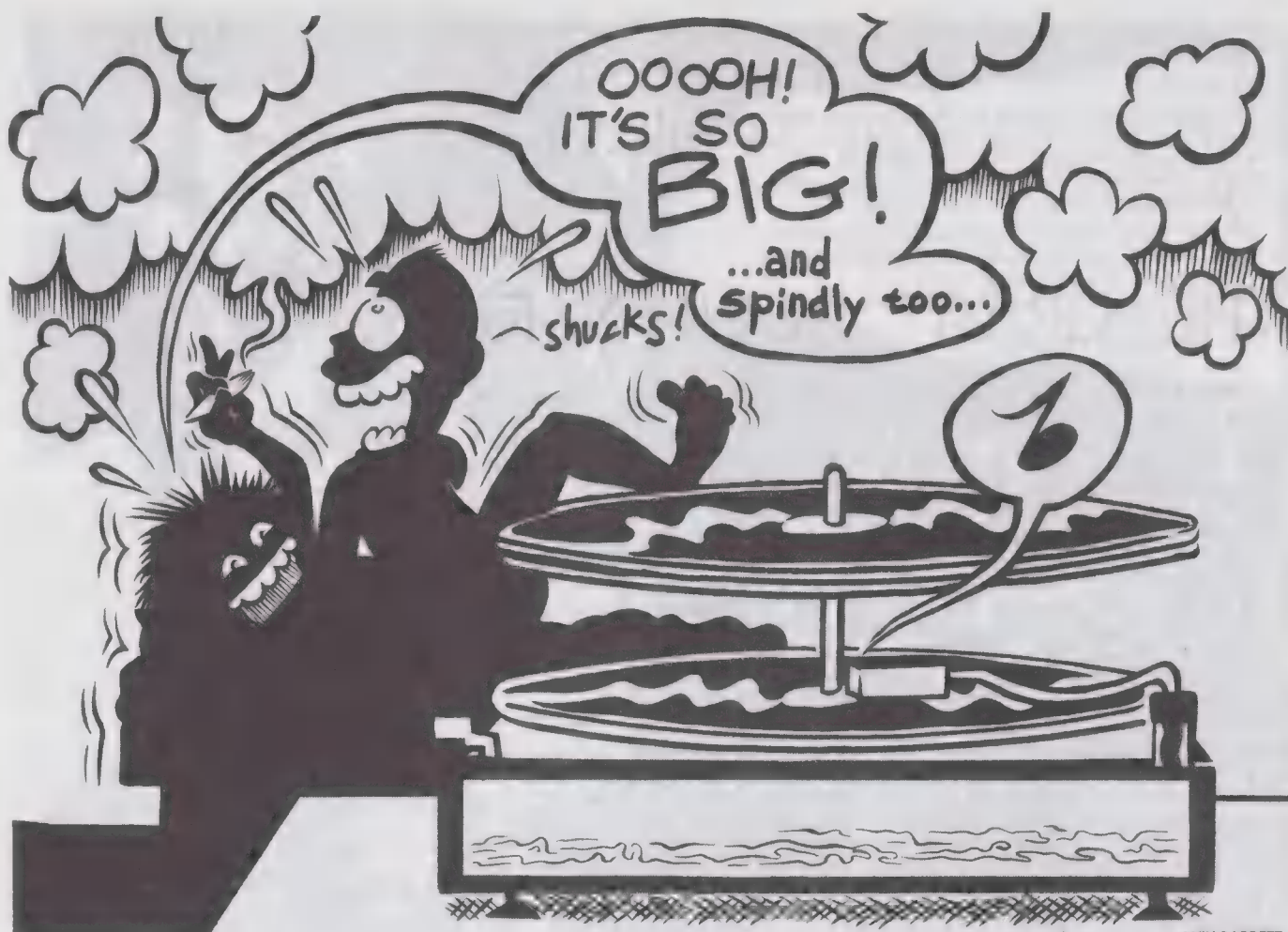
ostensibly because manual stimulation is as far ■ you're gonna get before you have to get up and flip the record over. After putting on record one, side 1, a person needs to get up, flip the record over, play side 2, get up, put record one away, haul out record two, play side 3, get up, flip the record over, and play side 4. One now needs to get up and stagger to the turntable *thrice* to hear all four sides of a double album in sequence; in tymes of olde one got up but the once. I submit to you one earnest (if rhetorical) question: *Apart from allowing a brief period of recovery from the indentations being inflicted on my sofa, La-Z-Boy® or sex partner, how can this be considered an improvement?*

The old school spindles served 7" records even more fabulously: We didn't have those flimsy little yellow plastic 45 adapters back in the day (well, I guess we *did*, but nobody really used them); we had ■ big black thing that was roughly the size and shape of a *Star Trek™* communicator, which we boldly fit over our mighty spindle. This allowed us to stack not one, not two, but *seven* 7" records up on the spindle's burgeoning SkyDeck. We pulled the little switch once, sat back, and the records dropped and played and dropped and played, one after the other. When all seven records had played, the stylus returned to its inactive position and the turntable stopped. *I could listen to the A sides of seven 45s without standing up once.* If you were hanging out with your buddies after school, you could take turns fixing up seven-record stacks—youthful musical democracy in action. Further, if you wanted to get all mental on one song and have it repeat over and over and over again, you could just move the arm all the way to the right, and the record would repeat infinitely, kinda like you can do with digital tracks, but with vinyl. *Now whaddaya hafta do?* Play one record, sit down, get up, walk over to the stereo, change or flip the record, play the next song, sit down, three minutes later get up and do it all over again, with NO capability to auto-repeat a particularly stunning track until your mom bangs you in the head with a lasagna pan. I used to be able to listen to seven 45s in a row without regaining any manner of vertical posture, now I have to get up and go to the stereo every three fucking minutes. *What the fuck, am I listening to records or prepping for a colostomy here??* For ■ second time, I ask you: *HOW IS THIS AN IMPROVEMENT??*

The problem, of course, lies in the spindle: We don't *have* spindles anymore. We have *nubs*. Our turntables now come with a large clit instead of a small boner (*do I toss in an obligatory joke about Japanese porn actors and Vanessa Del Rio here? No. No I do not. I have matured and moved on from such observations*). Bonerless, our turntables are completely unable to play 7" records the way nature intended (seven at ■ time), or double albums as the format dictates is right and just (i.e., with a single turntable trip / bathroom break in the middle). Lobby for a gender-free Rock Continuum all you wish, but *do not discount the power of the boner*. We NEED that thing, man! We need that central metallic protrusion, towering high and proud at the apex of our stereo crap! We need the soothing balm of automation, playing our records one after the other like some manner of mechanized sonic love slave!! *We need to be getting up and going to the record player ■ FUCK of a lot less when we're stoned!!! Who's with me???*

So how did we wind up in such a mess? How did the capabilities of our Rock Transmission Equipment become so horribly, terribly nerfed over the last four decades?? WHY HAVE WE LOST OUR ROCK BONERS??? I, my friend, will tell you why: *Vinyl lovers*. Vinyl lovers (not to be confused with latex fetishists, which I would be kind of into, maybe, if that garb wasn't so pricey) are, put simply, *people who hate vinyl*. *THEY HATE US FOR OUR FREEDOM! THEY HATE US FOR OUR VINYL!! THEY HATE THESE CANS!!!* Vinyl lovers *couldn't stand* how our Mighty Rock Boners slapped our records down atop each other from a height of ■ few inches. *Vinyl on vinyl contact! This is an abomination in the eyes of the lord!* The process of plopping down from the spindle could inflict tiny dings, scruffs, or scratches on one's beloved vinyl. Gravity's a bitch. *ETHEL!!! CALL 911!!! MY RULER 45 JUST WENT FROM NM- TO VG-!!!* So, because of these fucking ding-a-lings (many of whom shitcanned their vinyl when the pristine clarity of the compact disc provided a temporarily more attractive alternative, only to re-purchase it all later), our record players are now set up to play ONE record, and ONE record only. *Put your precious vinyl on. Sit down. Stand up. Take your precious vinyl off. Sit down. Stand up. Do it some more. ISN'T THIS AWESOME? MUSIC AS IT WAS MEANT TO BE HEARD!* It's fuckin' **STUPID** is what it is. We get stuck





ALEX BARRETT

*I used to be able to listen to seven 45s in a row without regaining any manner of vertical posture, now I have to get up and go to the stereo every three fucking minutes.*

with all the dumb aspects of owning vinyl, and the Vinyl Lovers take away half the cool aspects so that we don't hurt ourselves. Bah humbug. I recently bought an Orbit® turntable; they're kind of the new hot thing in turntablery (or so their advertisements led me to believe), very colorful and minimal and high-end and all that shit. There's a stylus, a platter, an off/on switch, and two spinny things that correspond to 33 and 45 rpm. There's also a belt that looks like a black licorice whip that goes around either the smaller spinny thing for 33, or the bigger spinny thing for 45—you gotta manually slip it off the one spinny thing and on to the other if you wanna switch speeds (this, of course, generally results in the belt—which isn't stretchy whatsoever—just falling off and lying there, requiring minutes of stern fiddle-fucking around just to get the belt around the platter and the corresponding spinny

thing again. GODDAMMIT, WHETHER ANYONE HERE ACTUALLY SMOKES MARIJUANA OR NOT, I THINK WE CAN ALL AGREE THAT NOT MAKING IT FUCKING IMPOSSIBLE TO OPERATE STEREO EQUIPMENT WHILE STONED SHOULD BE DESIGN IMPERATIVE #1!!! SHEESH!!!). I even opted for the acrylic platter, so my turntable platter bed is a 1/4 inch-thick disc of clear acrylic (it cost plenty extra, but it looks *really cool*. Except I have to cover it with a regular black felt turntable mat, which seems kind of like Greg Ginn covering his clear acrylic Dan Armstrong® guitar with grip tape). The acrylic platter was cool—until I found out the thing absorbs and radiates heat like a motherfucker. For twenty years, my stereo sat in front of my living room window with warping never a concern (sometimes it pays to live in Wisconsin); nowadays if I open the blinds on a sunny

day, the album I'm playing will have warped *before the side is even finished*. So, somehow, humanity has gone from cheap stereos that played multiple records for us at the pull of a lever, changed speeds with the flick of a switch, and turned themselves off when they were finished, to expensive stereos that have to be started and stopped manually, play one record at a time, can't be used during daylight hours, and require amazing feats of dexterity and perseverance just to switch speeds. FUCK YOU AND THE CHINTZY LITTLE FLAT YELLOW PLASTIC 45 ADAPTERS YOU FUCKS RODE IN ON!!! When the audio companies start running ads for prehistoric birds who play records with their beaks like on *The Flintstones*, I swear to fucking god I'm going to streaming.

Love,  
-Norb



RAZORCAKE 17



Dearest Radon,

Congratulations ■ you for releasing your first record in 12 years.  
You are like the George Lucas of punk and this is your Phantom Menace.  
Mozart could write ■ symphony in 3 days but I totally get it.  
He didn't have to worry about crafting such lyrical wordplay ■■  
"oh haha oh haha way ■ way o" and "kibbles ■■ bits."

■ I seriously folks, listening to Dave play songs acoustic poolside  
■ J Wang's house ■■ I swam around and drank beer in the pool  
■ ■■ of the true shining moments of my life.

May this record bring that ■■ joy to all that hear it.

Radon Radon 4-ever

(Joey - LITTLE DEPUTY.RECORDS)

# RADON

The new album!  
Out now!!

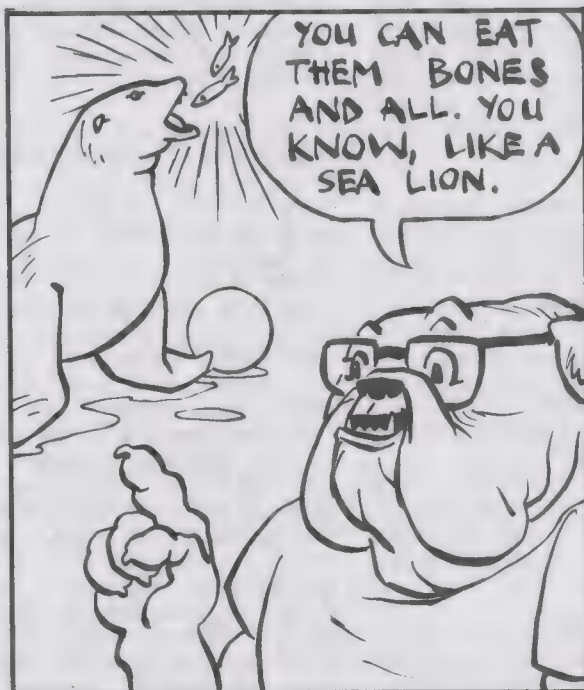
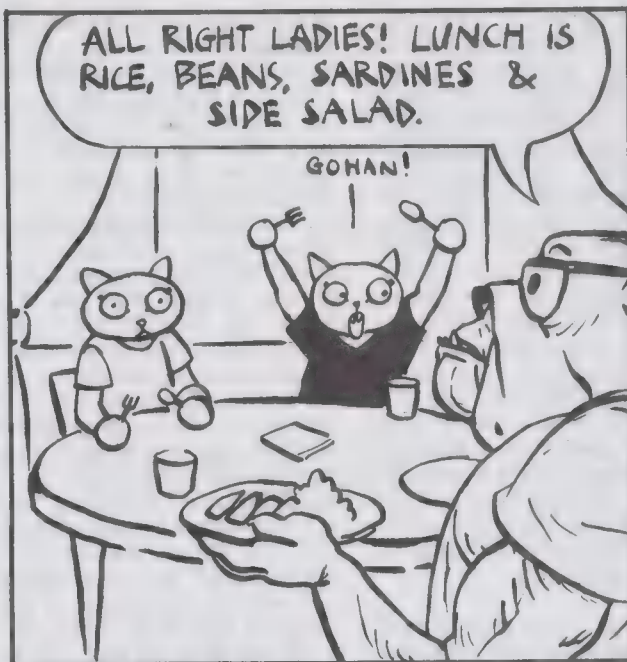
[Eagerbeaver.shop-pro.jp](http://Eagerbeaver.shop-pro.jp)





# WON TON NOT NOW

BY WUKY NAKA



THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT. KN 2/8



## GUEST COLUMN

MICHELLE  
CRUZ GONZALES

One person's  
dystopia is  
another's  
utopia.

# Urban, Gritty, and Grayscale: Why Dystopian Literature Is Totally Punk Rock

1984: Past, Present, Future

In 1984, the actual 1984, I saw the band Reagan Youth at the Democratic Convention held that year in San Francisco with my friend, and soon-to-be bandmate, Nicole Lopez. I was fourteen, clad in black and flannel, with freshly chopped hair. Nicole's mom drove us three hours from our small town in the California foothills to San Francisco just so we could see the bands and take part in the protest. A protest site was designated in the empty lot at Mission and Howard across from the Moscone Center, which back then (pre-multi-million dollar buildings on every square foot of empty space) was simply a large slab of concrete that took up the entire city block. It was there amongst a sea of leather jackets, mohawks, ripped jeans, and undercover cops cleverly disguised in jean jackets and protest buttons that Reagan Youth played with the Dead Kennedys, MDC, and the Dicks.

Given the ominousness of the year 1984 and the draconian policies put in place by the outgoing president whose policies had further marginalized the lives of many (especially youth from low-income families) there was a lot to protest. Sort of unknown on the West Coast, Reagan Youth played early in the day, drew an enthusiastic crowd of white, brown, and black punk kids with their energy and aptness of a band with their name playing the Rock Against Reagan tour. Dave Insurgent, who for some reason had hippie-punk, white-boy dreadlocks, stood at the edge of the stage, leaned into the crowd and incited our ire. Frustrated about class hierarchies, Reagan Youth drew the lyrics for the song "Brave New World" straight from the book of the same name by Aldous Huxley. Many English punk bands wrote anti-Thatcher songs during the same time period, songs that also referenced dystopian texts, or the dystopian nature of the Reagan/Thatcher era that was punctuated with military escalation and pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps style welfare reform.

Growing up Xicana in a small, predominately white town in California, I felt much like a dystopian protagonist: trapped in a world that denied me my individuality. A spiky-haired, black eye-liner, ruffled Mexican rick-rack-skirt-wearing teen, I noticed many

punk kids came from broken homes, had parents who were addicts, or lived in boring go-nowhere suburbs. We hated polo shirts and boat shoes. We hated high school, sports, and anything else that felt like a popularity contest or that only served to distract us from the fact that we faced a very uncertain future amid the Cold War and threats of nuclear destruction. We were depressed. Our lives, as we were living them, didn't fit. While many adults tried to make us feel like it was us, like we weren't right, like we were messed up, like we were the problem, we had enough sense to know there was more to our dissatisfaction, our anger about social control and feelings of alienation. Angry punk rock songs and angsty literature were good outlets for these feelings. The Subhumans song "Big Brother" is a perfect illustration: "Here we are in the new age/There's a scanner in the toilet/To watch you take a bath/And there's a picture of Hiroshima/To make sure you never laugh."

In my teen years, it was political punk rock that helped me cope with feelings of estrangement, traumatophobia, and dying of radiation poisoning. When punk rock wasn't enough, I turned to dystopian fiction, a literary genre seemingly designed for punk rockers and teens who drew mushroom clouds on their binders. Dark in tone and topic, dystopian literature definitely wears all black.

Like punk rock, dystopian literature is urban, gritty, and grayscale, and like many punk rock bands, dystopian literature makes important critiques of society. Dystopian literature sneers satirically at inequality, hierarchical divisions, and autocratic rulers—punk rock often does the same. And probably for these reasons, many punk bands reference dystopian novels in their songs. Like Subhumans, Dead Kennedys reference 1984 in their song "California Über Alles," an anti-Governor Jerry Brown song, a song that shouts down yuppies taking over the state and making kids meditate in school: "Close your eyes, can't happen here/Big Bro on a white horse is near."

The majority of the Dead Kennedys lyrics are satirical, and satire is a device/genre that makes extra close examination of meaning especially important. Unlike what many

of my students often initially think, author Jonathan Swift is not being literal when he proposes we turn to cannibalism and eat babies to help the poor. And satire is partially responsible for my early confusion about the song "California Über Alles." Even at the age of fifteen when I blasted it in my room and pumped my fist in the air, or when I saw the Dead Kennedys at the Mabuhay Gardens in San Francisco, I'd wonder why pick on a liberal Democrat? Why pick on Jerry Brown? Looking at these lyrics now, I, of course, realize why. First off, 1984 author George Orwell would say all people in power should be questioned and scrutinized. Secondly, if you look closely at what Jello Biafra, singer and lyricist of the Dead Kennedys was critiquing, you see yuppies. Look again at all the lyrics, and you'll see gentrification in the song's references to jogging, organic food, and "zen fascists." Biafra's fears of a "cool, hip" (read expensive) California have come true, especially in the hyper-gentrified, and now exclusive, San Francisco where the Dead Kennedys were based. Go see it for yourself if you can afford the trek. Take a hard look at tent cities, where people priced out of apartments now live, all that they own in the world lining freeway off-ramps, set amongst a backdrop of towering glass buildings and ten-dollar tacos.

Political punk rock has always been an urgent critique of immediate concerns, a sort of real-time social critique in song, while dystopian novels are cautionary tales. Yet, the themes addressed by the two are often the same: squashed individuality under the pressure of societal norms, corporate control of our lives, and subtle and overt forms of propaganda used by democratic nations that should know better. The band, Set It Straight from Redding, Calif. (active 2004 -2007) addresses some of these themes in the song "Self-Deprogramming." It was written prior to Gary Shtenyngart's modern dystopia, *Super Sad True Love Story*, a novel about the dangers of group think and a nation obsessed with mobile devices, youth, and hotness ratings. The novel, published in 2010, and the song have a lot in common, "Super latte charged electrons, androids with no face/ But only those who subconsciously want to live their lives spoon fed/ subordinated, placid, incarcerated, succumb to the machine." Like Shtenyngart's *Super Sad True*





LOMA | STEVE KAMENETZ

## Robots, surveillance via mobile devices, and other futuristic dystopias, almost seem quaint compared to what is happening now.

*Love Story*, this song criticizes modern-day forms of brainwashing via slick technology and the allure of power. Its references to lattes and androids are familiar dystopian fears regarding loss of individuality and ■ loss of humanity. It's a loss of humanity we sadly participate in via our robotic obsession with digital technology that often does the thinking for us.

### A Dystopian Bait and Switch

Of course, robots, surveillance via mobile devices, and other futuristic dystopias, almost seem quaint compared to what is happening now. In the post-smart phone 2000s, while we were busy worrying about digital technology spying on us, replacing humans, and stealing our jobs, what many thought were archaic forms of xenophobia, misogyny, and gender terrorism roiled hot and ready to explode, and an old-school totalitarian was making his move. Now trapped in a dystopian landscape

of our own, Donald Trump used his celebrity, wealth, and privilege to invoke ages-old rapist-terrorist-nativist-racist fear mongering and won the election and the culture wars with help from the outdated and systematically racist electoral college. As president of the United States, he continues to animate ■ surprisingly large base of people and sow unnatural distrust of the media. He has also attempted to rewrite history ■ it happens and our perception of it—a major feature of Orwell's totalitarian regime in *1984*.

Some unclear about the purpose of the genre believe dystopian novels have, in some ways, foretold the future, but dystopian novels, like many punk songs, are really meant to be critiques of folly in our current societies. Still, one person's dystopia is another's utopia. For those swayed by promises of walls, Muslim bans, mass deportations, and nativists' vision of America (not to ■ mention ■ threat of a reversal of ■

woman's right to choose and transgender rights) we have entered what the party leader, O'Brien, in *1984* called the golden country: ■ place where everything seems fine, everyone looks like you, acts like you, believes what you believe, a place where no one is a threat or ■ challenge to the status quo and where those who disagree are silenced. But we are not fine. So many of us have become reacquainted with our inner angsty teenager or our inner dystopian protagonist. We will re-read *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Herland*, *We*, *Parable of the Sower*, and we will pump our fists in the air to our favorite old punk songs, but that's not all we'll do. No, that is not all.

—Michelle Cruz Gonzales

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RAZOPHONE 21









## Rachel Framingheddu's Photo Page

"Isle of California" by Victor Henderson, Terry Schoonhoven, and Jim Frazin (L.A. Fine Arts Squad, 1972. 1616 Butler Ave., L.A., Calif.)





# PURO PINCHE POETRY Y CUENTOS

EDITED BY EVER VELASQUEZ AND EUGENIA NICOLE

**Ay Señora,  
you selling  
your ranfla?**

## *Grandma's Impala*

Grandma's sixty-eight Chevy sails down Brooklyn Avenue,  
me in the front seat—

head out the window like ■■ excited beagle.

Who cares if we're going to Alpha Beta

or a dart tournament at ■ rival Moose Lodge.

The bright chrome bumper

emphasizes the copper Impala's serious brow

as if to say, *Don't mess with me.*

Grandma channels her El Paso, Pachuca roots—

keeping ■ sharp gaze on the road;

we float on KIIS FM airwaves, turning

up the volume with the first riff of "Rock Lobster."

She wears shorts when it's hot

exposing the faded "V" tattoo, for Vamps,

on her right thigh. Sometimes the local cholos stop

by and ask, *Ay Senora, you selling your ranfla?*

*No, sorry mijo, not right now,*

because we have more sailing to do—

and whenever I ask where we ■■ going,

she says, "To hell, if we don't change our ways."

—Julie Macias

*Julie Macias is a Latinx, Angeleno-American, poet residing in Monterey Hills, Northeast L.A. Her interests include but are not limited to DJing, dancing, knitting, and overthrowing the racist, patriarchal, hetero-normative, cis-gendered, ableist, neo-liberal capitalist state. IG: @jujuinlalaland*

## *Negrita Cucurumbé*

My abuelito was a world traveler.

Before diabetes. Before the doctors amputated his leg. Before his heart attack. Mi abuelito was ■ photographer, a journalist, ■ businessman, un viajero. Every few years my abue would take his nietos to Mexico. My turn finally came the fall of '96, the year before he passed away. I was only six years old. This would be my grandpa's last trip to Mexico.

What was supposed to be a weekend spent in Magdalena turned into a month-long road trip as far south as Acapulco. My abuelito was spontaneous like that. He crammed my grandma, my brother, my two primas, and my Tia Kika with her one-month-old baby and me, La Morena, into his black Cadillac.

We passed the time singing Ritchie Valens songs to each other. Reciting lines from our favorite movies, feeling like true rebels, ditching school for a whole month just because, and sitting in the Caddy sin el cinturón.

My prima and I would take turns sitting on grandma's lap. I always hated when it was my turn to sit up front because abuelita wasn't always very nice. "She never knew how to love," my mom would tell me. "She was raised by las monjas."

In Acapulco, piojos claimed my mane as their home. Taking refuge in the forest of my curls. My abue sat me in her lap. Combing through my pelo, she'd pick at the piojos. The sound of their shells popping against her nails and the bloody napkin she kept on her knees to wipe with after is ■ memory I wish I could forget. I was embarrassed and ashamed. "La Morena tiene piojos" she would say, matter-of-factly. When she took a break from my hair, she rubbed at the creases in my arm, confusing the melanin in my skin for mugre. Rubbing away at dirt that didn't exist, she said my skin was "el color de los Indios."

The mosquitoes in Mexico loved me, though. They chased after my caramel skin like honey bees, suckling away at my sweet and tinny blood from my brown, bony limbs. At the end of our road trip, I was covered from head to toe in mosquito bites. When the scabs finally fell off, they left behind large dark scars with white centers. My brown skin didn't scar like the soft white of my mother's or my grandmother Tancho. "Que le paso ■ la Morena?" People would ask when I came back from Mexico. La Morena. A nickname that was given to me because of my skin color. I never understood why I was La Morena when I had an older prima who was just as dark as me, and they called her by her real name. I felt tainted. I wanted my skin to be like my that of my tia's and my primas'. Maybe then my abuela would love me more.

When I discovered Concha Nacar, I used it as a nightly ritual. With ■ Q-tip, I dabbed at all of the imperfections I found on my skin, on my face, on my legs and my arms. I was covered in white, pearly spots from head to toe. I rubbed the bleaching cream on my elbows, knees, and the creases of my arms where my grandma thought I was always dirty. I sat on my bed and read, counting down the twenty minutes before I'd wash the cream off with a rag. Praying and hoping that when washed off, the brown would be just a little bit whiter this time.

My mom used to sing "Mi Negrita Cucurumbé" to me, dancing and laughing at my absurd obsession at how much I hated being morena.

As far back ■ I can remember, my family has always loved traveling. We have so many cassette tapes of my abuelito narrating our vacations, of me celebrating my first birthday in Paris, the bullfights, the pyramids in Mexico, and the beaches in Acapulco. Some of our videos even have snippets of novelas taped over them.

My abuelo was a lot of things to us when he was still alive. He was ■ family man and a businessman; he held our familia together despite all of our discrepancies. But he wasn't perfect, either. He could be real mean





HUMBERTO HOWARD, IG: @humberto\_howard

## I rubbed the bleaching cream on my elbows, knees, and the creases of my arms where my grandma thought I was always dirty.

if he wanted to, and despite his dark skin, he was also very prejudiced towards other dark-skinned Latinos, even in our own family. This was my first exposure to colorism. It never made ■■■■ to me, and it always made me wonder if there was any love behind the ■■■■ La Morena.

If there was one important virtue I learned from my abuelo, though, it was to appreciate the luxury of traveling. Two years ago, I embarked on ■ backpacking trip throughout Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala. I sunbathed on the beaches of Oaxaca and went snorkeling in shark ray alley and the coral gardens of Caye Caulker in Belize. The sun loved my caramel skin and I loved it back. I even burned and turned ■ nice crispy brown soon after. The sun melted so much of that stigma I held onto as a child and young adult as La Morena. When I hear my grandmother's voice call me Morena now, I love it. I love the way the r rolls off her tongue and how her face brightens up with ■ toothless smile as she pulls me in for ■ tight hug: "Ayyy mi Morena." Most of my tias and tios who used to call me Morena, Morenasa and Morenita, are dead now, and it makes me sad knowing that I can't hear their voices calling out my name. La Morena.

When I returned to Mexico after weeks in Belize and Guatemala, ■ woman stopped me in the middle street and told me, "Ay mujer, me encanta tu piel!"

I thought of all the times when I was younger and I'd hide under towels and umbrellas at the beach, making sure to wear long sleeves so my dark skin wouldn't get any darker. I thought of my brown abuelito and my Tia Chepina shaking her hips and singing "La Morena quiere más! La Morena quiere más!" I thought of my mother dancing with two left feet in her kitchen shaking her dedo at me singing,

"¡Pero válgame mujer!

¿Pues qué no ves  
que así negra estás bonita.  
Negrita Cucurumbé.

—Eugenia Nicole

*Eugenia Nicole is an L.A. based writer. A caramel Carrie Bradshaw with more ass, sass, and just ■ little less cash. Follow her aventuras in the city through the eyes of a brown girl, one drink at a time.*

xoxo,

La Morena, IG: @nicult





# THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

RHYTHM CHICKEN

Ever since that initial exposure to punk rock I've gravitated towards the weird.

## The World Beyond Soup

Today is Easter Sunday. Today is also April Fools Day. I'm not sure exactly how often that happens, but I don't recall those two days on the same day before. It seems weird. I like weird. When I first discovered punk rock, I was attracted to the weird. I heard a new music and saw new forms of expression that at first seemed to be *weird*. After continued exposure, I came to understand that it was a more thoughtful, purposeful, or artistic type of weirdness. My twelve-year-old mind had a more simplistic word. It was *cool*. Ever since that initial exposure to punk rock I've gravitated towards the weird.

Now, to be sure, not all weird things are punk rock, and not all things punk rock are weird. I won't waste our time trying to define punk rock or evaluating the varying levels of weirdness in punk rock. I will, however, share with you the weird events of my last month. For the last six or seven years, March has been my most eventful month of the year. March is the month I close my soup shop and venture out into the world beyond soup.

It had been three years since my Hen and I traveled back to Poland. Kielbasaland would evade us no more! We acquired surprisingly affordable round-trip tickets for a direct flight, Chicago to Warsaw. I've flown this direct flight before and it usually took eleven hours. This particular flight took only nine and a half. That struck me as weird, but not exactly punk rock. We spent our first twenty-four hours in Warsaw dealing with jet lag, eating everything Polish, and then riding the train for about two hours east to my Hen's hometown of Biala Podlaska. I've always enjoyed the smaller towns in Poland. Warsaw and Krakow are major international cities, but smaller towns and villages just seem *more Polish* to my American mind.

I spent three days in Biala Podlaska three years ago, but this time stayed for a whole week. I thoroughly enjoyed spending more time with my Hen's family. We made a few interesting trips to nearby rural communities. We spent a day hiking along Poland's border with Belarus and interacted with EU border patrol. That was weird. We saw beaver wood and elk poop along the River Bug. That was weird. We saw about fifty stork nests, which I always find to be enjoyably weird. We happened upon a witch-themed restaurant, Karczma Baba Jaga in Majowka, which was deliciously weird!

Then I started spending most nights with my Hen's brother-in-law Czarek, listening to

his record collection. Czarek is a few years older than I and has been living in Biala Podlaska for most of his life. Czarek has also been into all kinds of music since the '70s. Growing up in communist Poland meant limited exposure to music from the West, but it also meant easy access to that era's host of Polish artists recording for the state-run record labels. Labels such as Tonpress, Polton, and Polskie Nagranie were releasing rock, metal, pop, new wave, jazz, and pop rock music in communist Poland. I've always found these recordings to be vastly interesting on multiple levels of weird, and in some cases, extremely punk rock.

I was drawn to Czarek's collection of 45s. They were all from Tonpress, featuring cutting edge bands from the late '70s/early '80s such as Brygada Kryzys, Lady Pank, Republika, Maanam, and Klaus Mitffoch were playing their Polish versions of music along the lines of Devo, Minutemen, The Clash, The Knack, Oingo Boingo, and the Talking Heads. All this stuff has always sounded so appealingly weird to me because it's kind of like walking into a completely detached parallel universe and finding the Polish version of all your favorite music, sung in Polish. The recording, production, songwriting, lyrical style, and album cover art are all somewhat similar to the cutting-edge music of the West, but just... *weirder*. I've been hearing people say stuff like "Keep Portland weird," well I'm sorry Portland, but this stuff makes you sound like the white-bread aisle at Walmart. Czarek sent me home with thirteen of his old 45s, and I simply could not be more thankful.

My third day in town Czarek took me to the town's brand new record store called Trzaski. It was explained to me that "trzaski" is the Polish word for the pops and crackles one hears on older vinyl records, a suitably cool name of a shop carrying primarily vinyl. I've heard many people's opinions of the pros and cons of the vinyl resurgence lately, but to see such a cool little record shop like this in a small town in Eastern Poland, well, it was cool. Within ten minutes of walking in the door I found a record I've been seeking for about sixteen years. I now own an original pressing of *Nowe Sytuacje* by Republika. This record came out in 1982 on Polton Records. To any Midwest American schmuck like me who grew up on similar American music from that era, this record is pure weird gold in the best way possible. It has been on my

record player non-stop since returning home, *trzaski* and all.

We were only in Poland for a little over two weeks, but things were weird and punk rock in northern Wisconsin as well. A short while before leaving this country, I threw the annual punk show in my soup shop. This show is usually predictably weird in that it is an all-out punk rock show in a tiny, tiny, *tiny* soup diner. This year we crammed about forty people into a place with a fire capacity of twelve. Ephraim City Limits Music Festival, as I call it, is always just two bands and one of them is always Holy Shit! from Milwaukee. According to the time schedule on the flyer, the entire music festival fits in a time frame of *two hours*! Some music festivals last two weeks, two weekends, or even two days. ECL is scheduled to last two hours.

This year's ECL had another weird twist. The Milwaukee band that Holy Shit! brought with them this time was a band I've heard about for years and always thought their name alone earned them a spot in the festival. Finally, Soup Moat would play in my soup shop! At 7:00 PM people started filling up my tiny diner. Folks drove up from Sturgeon Bay, Green Bay, Milwaukee, and Madison. The farthest guests, however, were Ric Six and Kat who flew in from New Jersey! Soup Moat hit the kitchen and rocked the roof off the joint! Their soupy sounds were weirdly delicious and deliciously weird! The first course was soup, but the next course would be chicken.

**Dinghole Report #144  
A Chicken Sandwiched  
Between Soup and Shit!  
(Rhythm Chicken  
sighting #708)**

My soup shop, as stated earlier, is really tiny. This makes it difficult for the Rhythm Chicken to find new, excitingly weird places to play inside the shop. Previous Chicken sightings were witnessed in the kitchen, in front of the coolers, in front of the dish sinks, and in the bathroom. Tonight's dose of chicken ruckus would be rocked out directly in front of the fireplace! I pushed the crowd apart and quickly set up my tools of chaos in record time. Suddenly a shirtless chicken with a belly full of Hamms emerged from the dish room and mounted the kit. For the first time in a middle timeslot between the two bands, and for the first time in front of my favorite fireplace, the Rhythm Chicken assaulted the squished





KASIA ONISZCZUK

## It's kind of like walking into a completely detached parallel universe and finding the Polish version of all your favorite music, sung in Polish.

punk festival attendees with a pummeling display of thunder and lunacy! The rhythms were explosively pompous! The animalistic gyrations of wings and drumsticks were a weird sight for the unsuspecting! Some might argue the Rhythm Chicken is not exactly punk rock... but I like to think the weird factor is undeniable. The ruckus ended with a sorely unrehearsed belly flop onto the drumset and some flailing about which left a panting pile of chicken on the floor bathing in a shower of camera flashes.

My rusty and rickety drum set was hastily dismantled and thrown into the

shower stall while Holy Shit! took to the kitchen. For the fifth time, my little soup diner was graced with the amazing hardcore sounds of Andy, Tabman, Eric, and Tony. These guys practically rip the crowd's faces off with their blistering hardcore. Tabman was instantly up on the soup counter, then on the crowd, then crawling around beneath the crowd, and then back in the kitchen. Green Bay's Rev. Nørb even showed up to witness the soup-chicken-shit sandwich, which only increased the weird level of the audience. Andy Junk was shirtless and up on the soup counter trying to strangle his guitar. Holy

Shit! finished their final song and the little soup diner erupted with roars of approval.

At that point I sighed my usual sigh of relief that the cops never showed up and another ECL is in the books unhindered. I then glanced up at my kitchen clock and noticed the *really* weird part of this year's two-hour music festival: IT WAS DONE IN JUST UNDER ONE HOUR! I'm not even sure how that happened, but dang if that ain't punk rock!

—Rhythm Chicken





## Chris Boarts Larson Photo Column - Avail

Chris Boarts Larson, [www.slugandlettuce.net](http://www.slugandlettuce.net) | [fb.me/slugandlettuce](https://fb.me/slugandlettuce)







Avail at Twisters April 1999



Avail was so much a part of my Richmond experience. To be honest, if not for Avail I may never have even visited Richmond, let alone moved here. When I did settle in RVA, in the late '90s, Avail were at the height of their popularity and there are barely words to describe how much fun and awesome those shows were. After putting together the RVA Hardcore Punk 1997-2002 photo show at Vinyl Conflict this past March—and going through a lot of Avail photos—this one stuck out for me because of the crowd and

the finger pointing moment. Twisters was over-crowded, sweat-soaked hot, and it was one of the best shows ever. I almost passed out from heat exhaustion and punk rock satisfaction after. I've been listening to a lot of Avail, while going through the photos, bringing back the best memories of those times, those people, and just how much I love that band.

—Chris Boarts Larson



I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DATE

**Moon had his fair share of violence and other assorted wackiness.**

# Moon's Eclipse

I had a few friends growing up who would often drive while soused to the gills on booze, which is something I think we can all agree is ■ pretty stupid fucking thing to do. One friend in particular—who shall remain nameless here for the sake of avoiding embarrassment and further ridicule—fancied himself some heavy duty mischief while getting his sip on. Driving across multiple front yards of houses was one of his favorites—driveway, front lawn, driveway, front lawn, driveway, front lawn, off the curb, \*crunch\*, driving away like nothing happened. The elementary school just up the street from where we both lived had a huge, grassy field butting up to an asphalt playground that ran the entire length of the school. When maintenance workers for the school district forgot to lock the access fence on the other side of the field, Mr. Adventure took this opportunity to drive his truck in and onto the field for some high-speed, full-throttled figure skating. Now that I think about it, he did this a few times when he wasn't drinking, too. That poor grassy field.

I was talking about this kind of shenanigans in great detail with a pal of mine at work when the rather unfortunate story of Keith Moon, drinking, and his car came up. My pal gave me a weird look, thinking that I was pulling his leg. It wasn't until I looked the story up to show him it really happened when I discovered it happened the day I was born, which was ■ extra bumner, being Moon is one of my all-time fave drummers.

For those of you not in the know, Keith Moon was the drummer for one of the U.K.'s best rock'n'roll exports, The Who. Keith was kicking ass and at the top of his game in 1970. Because Moon had his fair share of violence and other assorted wackiness going on (which included him constantly whetting his whistle), it behooved him to hire his pal Neil Boland to drive his drunk ass around.

Moon and a handful of his friends were at the Red Lion Disco, ■ pub in Hatfield, Hertfordshire (twenty-plus miles north of London) on January 4, 1970. As a favor to Moon's neighbors who were opening the Red Lion Disco, Moon attended as a celebrity guest. They were immediately noticed by a clusterfuck of Nazi teen

skinheads who weren't happy to see him. The pub was a typical watering hole for working class people who were getting offended by the way Moon handled himself, ordering his usual—expensive brandy instead of beer, and arriving chauffeured in a Bentley. Many pub patrons hated that Moon was snobbishly flashing his wealth, and when Moon and his friends got into the Bentley that Boland had pulled around, the skinheads starting fucking with them. They threw coins and rocks at the car, and then began rocking it and trying to turn it over. When Boland realized the skinheads were preventing the Bentley full of people from leaving, he most likely decided to get out of the car to confront them. Boland, who was driving at this point, got out of the car to face down the skinheads, which was when things started to go from bad to worse.

Although police investigators were unsure whether or not Boland exited the car on his own or was dragged out during the brewing shitstorm, it's very likely he chose to get out: remember, Boland was also Moon's bodyguard. When Boland realized he was no match for that many angry skinheads, they chased him down a bit and began rat packing him. It was at this moment Boland ended up in front of the car.

When the whole scene started getting too gnarly, Moon got desperate to get his people the hell outta there, said, "We've got to get out of this." He then slipped over to the driver's seat and either stepped on the accelerator, or simply grabbed the wheel of the already idling car. According to eyewitnesses, the Bentley "shot out of the car lot," which would imply Moon had accelerated the car rather than just steered it. The car jolted forward and then proceeded to move about ten miles per hour down the road as the skinheads continued chasing and pounding on the vehicle.

When Moon drunkenly drove away from the chaos, other people immediately began shouting at the car. At first, Moon and his passengers thought it was more harassment from the Nazi dickheads at the pub, but when they pulled over a little ways down the road at a lighted area to get help, they realized they had been chased by local pedestrians who were trying to tell them that someone was stuck underneath their car. Boland had ended up underneath

the Bentley when Moon drove it away from the pub confrontation. Even more upsetting is that no one in the car noticed while Boland was dragged one hundred yards down the road. When Moon tried reaching underneath the car for Boland, he said all he could pull out was brains. Boland's head had been crushed by the car and Boland was declared dead on arrival at the hospital.

Because of Moon's track record of drinking with The Who, the press relished the opportunity of to paint him as the bad guy in this unfortunate fatality, which was ■ fucked thing to do, being that Moon planned ahead of time to have a driver in place, knowing that he was going to be getting snookered that evening. Certain people even claimed Moon killed Boland on purpose. Jerks.

Boland's daughter (four years old at the time of the accident) is still convinced Moon's wife, Kim, was driving at the time of her father's death, but eyewitnesses Jean Battye and "Legs" Larry Smith who were in the Bentley, claimed Moon was at the wheel. Boland's family were convinced of ■ cover-up going on, and Moon couldn't have been driving being that he never, ever drove, even when sober. Because the recollections of that evening were so chaotic and eyewitness accounts so scattered and confused no one can ever one hundred percent know for sure who was driving the car.

When Moon appeared in court to find out where he stood in this situation, the judge and jury assigned to the case of Boland's death didn't find him guilty. Considering it ■ terrible accident, the judge even tried to personally exonerate Moon, who was wracked with overwhelming guilt over the incident. The judge told Moon he had no choice but to act the way he did and that as hard ■ it may seem, no blame should be taken for the unfortunate death of his work associate. It took the jury ten minutes to rule Boland's death accidental. Moon was still charged with drunk driving, as well as driving without a license and no insurance, to which he pled guilty. Months later, the court then wiped out all three charges, exonerating Moon.

Five of the eight Nazi shitkids were brought to trial and found guilty, sentenced





SHANE MILNER

## Police investigators were unsure whether or not Boland exited the car on his own or was dragged out during the brewing shitstorm.

to pay fines. They tried to justify being assholes that night, blaming the Moons for their behavior—Keith for ordering a large, expensive brandy and Kim's refusing them a ride home in the Bentley. It should've been all eight of 'em underneath that Bentley instead of Boland.

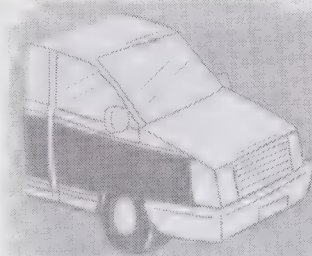
The SS Shitkids weren't the only ones who blamed Moon for Boland's death. Boland's family, who were still convinced

something was being covered up, were completely outraged Moon was not found guilty of murder or manslaughter. Boland's parents said they wouldn't rest until they were satisfied with knowing exactly how their son died that night. Boland's wife also blamed Moon to no end. Moon, who couldn't shake the pangs of guilt, went as far as to look after Boland's family, but they completely fucked him off, wanting

nothing to do with him. Until the day Keith Moon died on Sept. 7, 1978 almost nine years later, Nick Boland's death haunted him terribly, along with awful dreams that left Moon feeling undeserving to live.

—Designated Dale  
designateddale@yahoo.com





## GUEST COLUMN

JEFF SCHROECK

**Sometimes  
a thing just is  
until it isn't.**

# Engine Angel

When I was a school-aged kid, I knew a lot of car freaks: preteen *Motor Trend* magazine readers; aspiring automotive designers and future mechanics; nine-year-olds with an almost supernatural talent for knowing any car by the sound its engine made as it drove by. I hated every one of them. I hated Donald, giving me shit in middle school for memorizing the license plate but not the make and model of my mom's car ("It's red!" I'd say but that didn't cut it); I felt contempt and pity for Jared, one of my two best friends, for wasting time reading *Car and Driver* instead of *Hit Parader*, in the back of which were the lyrics to the songs we were supposed to be learning to play in our fifth grade grunge band. I hated the crew in high school that hung around the same bench every morning, in the hallway designated for us rock music kids, talking about bullshit '90s metal and cars every day while slapping their chests with limp hands and moaning at the special education kids as they walked by.

the inside of a car works. In my mind, I had separate compartments for the people who fixed cars and the smart people who drove them to and from their smart activities. I now realize that—aside from the bad personality examples in my life—this division mostly came from the false belief that those taking vocational classes were failures who in some way weren't good enough to go to regular school. And, at the time I took a firm stand on internal combustion engines: *I don't want to know anything about them.*

Fast forward to 2004. I turned the key of my Grandma's minivan but it wouldn't catch. It hadn't given us any trouble before this afternoon, no delayed startup or strange vibrations. The Ergs! had been down south, out to Texas, up into the Midwest, almost two weeks on the road with no issue. We played the Lost Cross the night before and drove the van the two blocks back to the house we stayed at. Sometimes a thing just is until it isn't.

He even played the bass, too, which he told us after spotting the gear in the back of the van. I had remnants of my old bias, though. Despite discovering through the work ethics and philosophies of the early SST bands that being able to diagnose and fix the problems in all areas of your life, including (and especially!) cars and vans, was a logical extension of trying to operate in and live ■ DIY lifestyle, it was weird to think of this car guy playing in bands.

He asked what the problem was, then asked one of us to try starting the car. Joe was closest to the driver door so he got in and turned the key, again and again. The tow truck driver walked around the car, listening, stopping to concentrate on an area, and signaling at Joe to continue. He looked like ■ painter inspecting his art to see where the next detail needed to go.

He said "hmm" then laid down on the ground, reaching an arm under the front end.

## He looked like a regular middle-aged guy but to a group of SST-heads like us, he looked a bit like Mike Watt.

I hated those kids, and because I hated them, I hated cars. To me, knowing what kind of car you were going to get when you grew up and learned to drive was stupid. I would get into arguments with my mom, whose preference for roomy towncars clashed with my trashy sense of economy and unostentatious presentation. My stepfather would put NASCAR on the big screen TV in his bar, and I'd watch those cars go two hundred miles an hour in ■ idiotic oval, lap after lap, thinking to myself entertainment couldn't get more dumb than this (this being before the rise of mixed martial arts).

Worse than all of this was the laughable, hypothetical scenario a single synapse in my head, most of which I needed to be free to store song lyrics and lines from *The Simpsons*, could instead be used to learn how

Joe was the only one of the four of us with enough sense to have ■ AAA membership, so he got them on the phone. I kept turning the key, hoping it only needed more time, like my car that sometimes would take twenty minutes to start, usually at the pump of a busy gas station. Joe hung up and we opened the hood, hoping to find an obvious problem. We poked around ■ minute until one of us said, "Yup. Looks like ■ engine." We let the hood slam to ■ close, ■ moment of sonic catharsis.

A tow truck driver showed up ■ an hour later. He was ■ small guy with short gray hair, wearing jeans, Chucks, and a blue flannel. He looked like ■ regular middle-aged guy, like any random guy in my hometown hanging out at the liquor store backroom bar with my dad, but to a group of SST-heads like us he looked like ■ bit like Mike Watt.

He steadied his arm and yelled to Joe to keep trying it. I couldn't see what his hand was doing but he was feeling around, like when the doctor checks the state of your organs by pressing on your belly.

He was under there for less than ■ minute and then the engine kicked on. He wriggled his way out from under the car and stood up, shaking the gravel from his back and brushing his hands clean. I, who had stood next to him with my arms folded like ■ dad pretending to know how a tool works, leaned onto the hood and asked what had happened.

"The throttle pin needed ■ quarter turn," he said.

"Ah," I said. "What's that?" He explained what it was, though my automotive mental





STEVE THUESON

block made me forget immediately, to the point that I'm not fully certain it's called a "throttle pin" at all. It's been fourteen years and I may be misremembering.

He asked us what we were doing in Carbondale, all the way out from New Jersey. We said we were on tour, hoping we wouldn't have to follow up with an explanation of small bands touring. He asked what kind of music we played. All of us hemmed and hawed and stammered the boilerplate answer to that question: "Punk, kinda... but not, like, screaming... just kinda fast... do you know Green Day?" He said, "Oh, like the Ramones! I love the Ramones!" He asked where we played in town and was familiar with Lost Cross, having gone there to see bands in the '80s.

One of us asked if he still played but he said other than noodling around on a guitar at home he didn't have time to play. It sounded a bit like he wished he still did.

His pager beeped. Joe tried to hand him a five dollar bill but he said, "Don't. You guys are gonna need it more than me. Gas ain't getting any cheaper." He clapped the two of us closest to him on the back. "Good luck on the road," he said. "Keep doing what you're doing, and may the bird of prosperity shit on all of your shoulders." We all laughed and said "thanks."

He got in his truck and started driving away but stopped. He put the truck in reverse, pulling up to where he could see us through his passenger side window. He

rolled it down and said, "I almost forgot: we're not supposed to fix anything, we're supposed to just put the broken down car on the truck and drive it to a garage, so luckily the car started by itself when I got here, right?" We all nodded. The guy waved and drove away.

—Jeff Schroeck

*Thanks to Lew Houston, since one of these stories in the first issue of Blur is based around the same incident.*





# THE ELECTED OFFICIALS

THE BAROMETRIC PUNK PRESSURE OF CHANGE

PHOTOS BY VERA HERNANDEZ & DAVID ENSMINGER LAYOUT BY JESSEE ZEROXED

VERA HERNANDEZ



THE ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE A BRASH, POTENT, HECTIC, AND FERVENT ANARCHO-POLITICAL FORCE WITH MEMBERS CULLED FROM OVER A DOZEN PREVIOUS BANDS, STRADDLING TEXAS AND NEW MEXICO. THEIR TYPICAL TARGETS ARE NOT JUST THE MACHINATIONS AND MADNESS OF GREEDY, TOXIC CORPORATIONS, CONSUMER SOCIETY, AND NOT-SO-HALLOW RELIGION--THEY ALSO FOCUS ON EVERYDAY DIY EFFORTS TO REBUILD THE FUTURE BASED ON BOTH RESISTANCE AND PARTICIPATION, BY ENCOURAGING TALK BUT LIONIZING ACTION EVEN MORE. IN DOING SO, THEY'VE ALSO TAPPED INTO MODERN MEDIA WITH ENERGY AND FOCUS, CREATING VIDEOS NOT JUST OF BAND LIFE AND THEIR PRODUCTS, BUT BROADER ISSUES, INCLUDING NATIVE AMERICAN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND BEYOND. IN TRUMP-IAN TIMES, WHEN SIDES HAVE BEEN POLARIZED, MOODS DARKENED, AND LURKING VIOLENCE POTENTIALLY POSSIBLE AROUND EVERY COMMENT AND GLARE, THE BAND HARNESSES DISCONTENT, HOOKS SOME HUMOR TO IT, AND PLACES IT INTO A GLOBAL VISION OF PEOPLE STRUGGLING FOR CHANGE, LIKE AN ACTUAL THOUSAND POINTS OF LIGHT EMITTING A SOUNDTRACK OF PUNK THAT EXTENDS WELL BEYOND BORDERS AND FEARS. IT IS THE SOUND OF EMPOWERMENT UNFOLDING.

INTERVIEW WITH  
**SOPHIE ROUSMANIERE**  
 BY DAVID ENSMINGER

**David:** Both members of your band and I have lived in both New Mexico and Texas, which seem vastly different on one hand, but eerily similar, in some aspects, in terms of the elite that control the resources of Austin and Santa Fe, whose Hispanic citizens are often shunted aside and ghettoized. Do you see it differently?

**Sophie:** In New Mexico, it seems the "Spanish" community is still for the most part in charge. These are people who have kept their place in government for centuries. Nepotism in business and government are commonplace to help those families maintain control. New Mexico is a proud tri-cultural union—Native, Hispanic and white. However, racism is commonplace, in part due to lack of education. Many Native American populations still live below the poverty line. We spent seven years working

on a film with the Navajo community who live under a cloud of coal smoke from power plants, yet forty percent do not have power to their homes. Also there are "Colonias" along the border that house Mexican immigrants living in sometimes dangerous, substandard conditions. In essence, your statement is correct, however complicated, since some of those Anglos in charge are named Martinez and Romero, blurring the line between Hispanic and Anglo.

Two of us live in Austin, Texas, a land once alive with Native American tribes, but few indigenous communities remain. Austin has proclaimed itself a "sanctuary city," becoming a battleground for a push back against Trump's immigration reform vision; however, this is not a good representation of the rest of Texas by any means, seeing as Texas has been nominated as the third most racist state (according to The Top Tens website).

**David:** Like in Seattle and San Francisco, Austin has sweeping gentrification underway. In Austin, it has directly impacted both the traditional black and Hispanic communities. Do you think punks have been part of the problem or solution, maybe both, in such cities? Meaning, sometimes they are the first Anglos to live or set up clubs in such neighborhoods.

**Sophie:** Punks in New Orleans and Pittsburgh have found opportunities to develop small businesses that might not survive in places with high rent. Punks, being unafraid and bold, are willing to experiment in gritty neighborhoods; take Onion Maiden, Skull Records, and Black Forge Coffee House in Allentown, Pittsburgh, Pa. The area is the edge of a gritty part of town. The opportunity to create edgy, risky businesses with low overhead is a space for punks to thrive. It's in that space between dangerous and cool that we thrive, where there is freedom to explore, on the bare edge of society.



Is it likely to develop in unsavory, more gentrifying ways after that? *Yes*. As people are drawn to the edgy artistic vision of freedom and creativity, they will move in as young creatives; however, soon they will want alarms on their doors and less noise on the street. I mean, really, who moves to Austin and then lobbies to stop freewheeling buskers from crooning on the corner? Ultimately, it depends on what kind of punks are moving in and how they interact with the space when determining whether their early adoption of gritty neighborhoods could ultimately lead toward gentrification.

**David:** The band just ventured to Mexico, where the global punk movement is burgeoning, but from your experience right now, what seems to be the socioeconomic-political-gender issues the community faces?

speaking out against police brutality. In 2014, forty-three student protestors were abducted by authorities in the Iguala mass kidnapping and secretly executed by authorities. When the truth was revealed, mass protests erupted in the streets.

Domestic abuse of women and sexual abuse seem to be significant, ■■ well as homophobia. Drug trafficking to the U.S. to fuel American addiction has driven the murder rate up over ■■ alarming 20,000 in 2017. There is definitely an element of danger in Mexico unlike our travels in Asia.

Punks there have issues with venues being shut down by police and complications due to inter-scene violence—and skinhead nationalist groups are around—but none were apparent at any of our shows. Mosh pits often smell like glue factories at times, as inhalants are cheap. Shows are in bars, DIY

around the globe, due to the length of time of this continued occupation.

While in Mexico in January, we recorded some bilingual songs for ■ split CD with Desviados and are now working with Bam Bam Records, a Mexican label, to distribute our music in Latin America. A visit to Columbia and Ecuador may be on the horizon soon.

**David:** What link would you draw between the bands you tour with—at least MDC, the Restarts, and Desviados? Is it ■ sense of deep conscience and commitment, or is simply ■ musical community?

**Sophie:** We love to play and tour with other bands that are talking about serious issues. These shows can feel like political rallies at times, activists brainstorming in the corners on how to include more punks in direct action campaigns or what worked for them in the



**IN INDONESIA, WE TRAVELED TO "LIBERTAD" FESTIVAL, WHERE PUNKS RENT A DESERTED TROPICAL ISLAND WITH BLUE WATER AND WHITE SAND FOR A WEEK.**

Most Americans simply pigeonhole the country as a narco-state full of victims.

**Sophie:** Mexico has ■ huge punk scene that has been going strong for forty years. There are anarchist collectives and punk-run organizations involved in working to improve human rights for women, homeless children, sex workers, indigenous populations, and for the general public. We were impressed to see that most bands we encountered have political content in their songs, and many zines are highly intellectual and socially conscious.

Their punk rock market, "El Chopo," is huge and has been going for over three decades. This market has everything from studded belts and band stickers to books on Mexican revolutionaries and translated Noam Chomsky texts. This is ■ country where the government is incredibly corrupt, where protesters can be kidnapped and murdered for

spaces, homes, and they do have some big international festivals.

We visited the site of ■ ongoing occupation of the Che Guevara Auditorium on the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) campus in Mexico City that has lasted for seventeen years. They have ■ massive zine library, ■ FM radio station, natural medicine center, vegan restaurant, and community living spaces here. Themes include feminism, animal rights, anti-corruption, anti-poverty, anti-capitalist, pro-indigenous, and pro-education rhetoric on the empowerment of marginalized communities.

Political rallies there ■■ common, and fests and events held are for and by the people. The UNAM protest is unique—it's ■ sign of the potential and long-lasting power of organized punks working for social change within ■ unified body. This is different from other university occupations and protests

past. All these bands carry messages about politics, social causes, and human rights.

In some cases, the words from these early MDC and Desviados songs in the 1980s that spoke of social change, deviation from the norm, and awareness of social issues translated into more than inspired music, leading the next generation of punks to consider what were the next steps to take to create change. The Elected Officials' first shows had protest signs on stage and petitions on our merch table, and we have produced and distributed zines in various languages. We see the value of translating social angst to music and film to education and action.

I owned a punk bar called Chaos City in Thailand from 2000 to 2005 and have been connected with that community for twenty years. So, for our first international tour, we decided to head to Southeast Asia, twice in two years. The second time we did the six-



country tour through China, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Singapore, and brought MDC. For one thing, traveling with MDC on countless buses, boats, airplanes, subways, motorcycles, subways, and taxis was sometimes challenging, as some of these guys are over sixty and they do travel with a lot of merch—books, CDs, and shirts. Also, we had to pack for everything, from freezing temperatures to 105° F and dripping. Some shows left us completely soaked.

In Indonesia, we traveled to Libertad festival, where punks rent a deserted tropical island with blue water and white sand for a week of raucous revelry. Three hundred punks from all over the world joined us in celebrating our international punk rock community with free vegan food, a tent for a venue, and animated discussion on a myriad of ideas and

While touring, we've been shooting a documentary about political music and its relevance today. We took aside the most politically charged bands to interview about their ideology, the dangers they face as activists, and the value they see in creating political music today. On one such mission, we visited Taring Babi, a collective in Jakarta headed up by members of Marjinal, a famous Indonesian political band. It has a communal space with a tattoo shop, wood print studio, recording studio, and living area. They do a lot of service work with underserved communities and teach homeless kids to play the ukulele, among other good works.

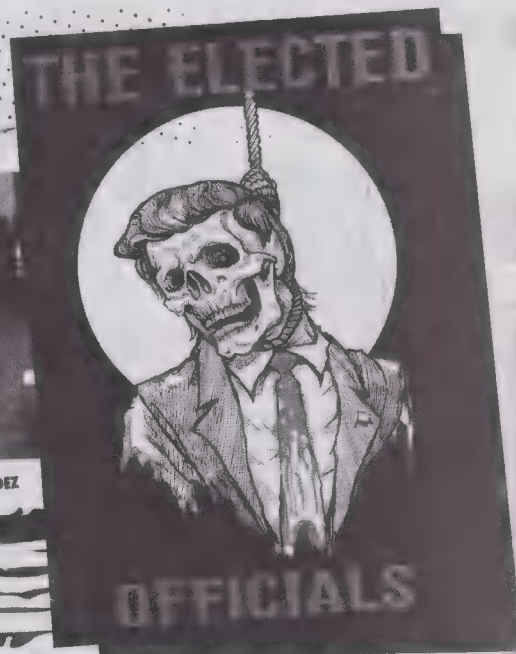
**David:** Wait, you operated a bar in Thailand, which for decades has fostered a small but intense punk scene. First, how did you ever

Atomic Influx. I booked monthly eclectic punk shows at a male go-go bar with my metalhead friend "X," who does most of the Elected Officials art these days.

I remember the first time I went to visit a huge Buddhist temple with my Thai punk friends who were all in gear and bullet belts with orange and pink mohawks. Punk rock and Buddhism? Sure, why not. Thai punks in many regions with strong religious conviction find interesting ways to live between reverence and irreverence. I have been living or visiting Thailand for eighteen years, and I have learned greater humility, respect and care for elders, the value of meditation, and the benefits of tradition in a value system that encourages colorful tradition in the name of the betterment of society. This was such a breath of fresh air



VERA HERNANDEZ



causes. Getting out there was pretty funny as well, the rickety motorized canoe that delivered us didn't inspire confidence.

The Restarts were hilarious to tour with. Our stomachs hurt with laughter. But they can be quite serious and get-things-done kind of guys, too. Robin Licker works in Mali supporting social causes and the band itself is extremely vocal about gender equality issues. Their song about David Kato, a Ugandan activist killed for speaking out against brutality, particularly inspired the rest of us.

end up there, and what did you learn from local punks and the community as well?

**Sophie:** I went to Chiang Mai, Thailand, as a backpacking body piercer and ended up opening a punk bar/tattoo shop in 2000 called Chaos City. It was the only punk bar in Southeast Asia at the time. We had punks coming from all over the world, a tattoo shop upstairs, a fireman's pole to get down to the bottom floor, and the walls were covered in visitors' hand-scrawled graffiti. I booked and promoted shows, opened a distro, and started a half Thai / half American band called

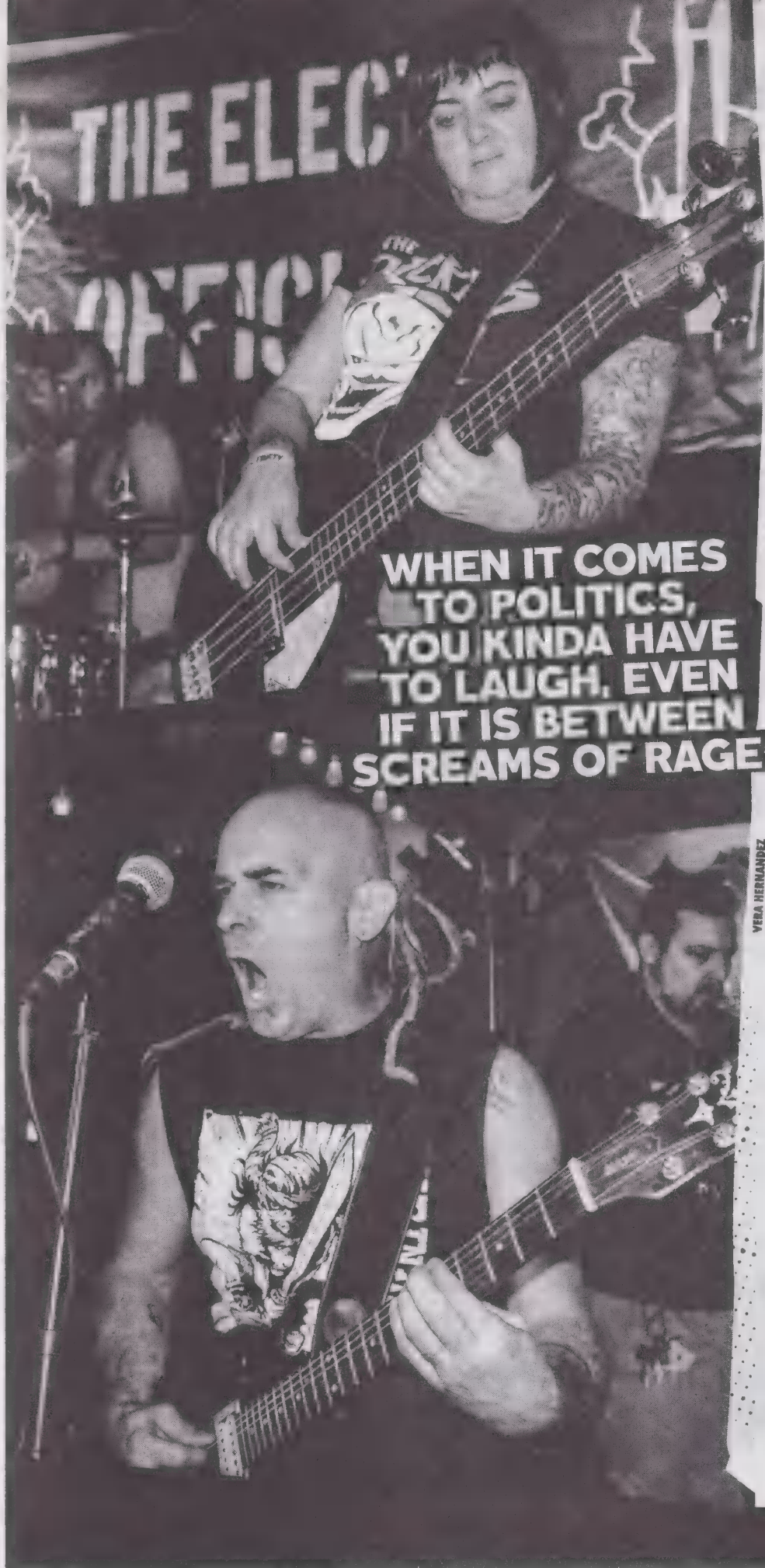
for me coming from an irreverent, wasteful, loud, pushy culture and being a bit that way myself. There is much to be learned there... pleasure in the simple things.

**David:** At the moment, movements evolving around #MeToo, safe spaces, border issues, and immigration are gripping America, but do these have currencies in the places you tour outside the States as well?

**Sophie:** The punks we connect with in other countries are working within their own social movements in a pretty grassroots way—many of them have limited access to the internet and often work in community-based groups. Punks, we've found, aren't very much involved with large international movements and aren't focusing on social media for most of their actions, as far as we know. Many work with local farmers, offering free libraries and clothes in Indonesia, feeding hungry families and homeless elders in Myanmar, and providing resources to abused sex workers in

**IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD, PUNKS ARE FIGHTING A MORE VISCERAL BATTLE. PUSHING FOR BETTER CONDITIONS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES, WORKING TO FIGHT POVERTY, DISCRIMINATION, AND CORRUPTION EVERY DAY JUST BY BEING THERE.**





Mexico. In Mexico, immigration is certainly ■ big issue right now; however, the dialog in the punk scene is mostly based on our terrible presidents and the challenges for families that are divided along the border. Some are searching for missing loved ones detained by U.S. authorities.

**David:** Some activists believe punk, or any form of popular music, may cause ■ “graying out” of local culture, due to the imported non-domestic music pushing aside local customs. Do you think that is true, or did you see bands melding both worlds—for instance, combining East and West?

**Sophie:** There is truth to the idea that punk is another form of cultural globalization; however, it sometimes comes with some voice of reason. Punk is more of an adoption of ■ foreign cultural phenomenon, for sure, yet some bands and regions make it more of their own than others. There are bands that use traditional instruments in their music in each of these countries, but few. Each local culture influences the scene in unique and different ways. Japan can be fast and furious—showy at times—and yet born from a culture of discipline. Mexico and Indonesia are sprinkled with revolutionary activist hotbeds, and both nations have a history of successful uprisings. Malaysia and Singapore can be rigid and angry, also reflecting back elements of their cultural restrictions.

**David:** Your themes have a vast range—from toxic home products to reorganizing communities on a grassroots level to coping with eco-catastrophe and third world test subjects—yet, like MDC, your live show is not some Crass/Discharge grim affair. Between your facial contortions, slightly mutant voice, and theatrical presence, ■ kind of dark humor is embedded. Is that a crucial part?

**Sophie:** Oh, hell yeah. We feel satire is a great tool for digesting the difficult themes we discuss. Harsh realities need ■ little humor to make them easier to take. We love Monty Python, and Jay (guitar) and I grew up studying theater. Jay was even in ■ weapons stunt fighting group. We love to talk about serious shit, but insist on having a good time doing it. In-between the angry rants, we like to include a little humor and a little empowerment where we can.

**David:** Do you think humor is, many times, an effective way to be political? Meaning, it sort of disarms people and gets them a bit more unguarded, so they can laugh at and understand their prejudices?

**Sophie:** Humor helps us laugh the tears away. The best part is that when we are disarmed by humor, we’re taken out of ■ judgmental place into an objective space. It’s therapeutic for us to laugh about our problems. Besides, when it comes to politics, you kinda have to laugh, even if it is between screams of rage.

**David:** What Elected Officials songs best express your sense of humor?

**Sophie:** For “American Girl,” a song we haven’t played in some time, I used to wear a wig and giant glamorous sunglasses. It’s probably our funniest song, all from the point



of view of a woman who only cares about how great her nails are, among other ultra-materialist priorities.

"Appetite for Corruption" also is darkly funny, from the point of view of a politician with an unquenchable hunger for political money and power. "Feedlot" relates American consumer culture to a cattle feedlot being "fattened for the kill."

Sometimes it's the things we say in-between the songs that make the show funnier or angrier. There was one song we don't do any more called "Disconnect." My favorite part was the intro because I got to talk about *Bridalplasty*, a horrific reality show about brides-to-be competing to get all the plastic surgery they could need to become the "perfect bride." This, to me, was a perfect example of the topic of the song, which is all about how messed up our cultural priorities are. The next episode she gets wheeled in all bandaged and bruised, and everyone loves her. It's funny, but only because it's so messed up.

We love good showmanship, though. We've seen bands sing into dildo microphones and old gasoline pumps, throw noodles, cake, and bloody maxi pads (ketchup) at us into the pit. Gwar, I say no more. Never got to see GG Allin....

There has been plenty of vomit, blood, and nudity along the way—however, to our collective delight. Our drummer, Shane plays nearly naked—just underwear and a tie—which he often throws into the crowd at the end of the show when it's all wet with sweat. We plan to some day incorporate live video projection into the act.

**David:** But how did you know humor was the best form to express the ideas in your tunes?

**Sophie:** I turned to humor as a way to deliver tough information through filmmaker Michael Moore's work *Bowling for Columbine*. He went bowling with survivors of the Columbine shooting and managed to make a darkly funny film about gun control. His other films, *Roger and Me* or *Sicko*, help people understand tough issues through humor also. On a biological level, laughing sends uplifting endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin to the brain to counteract the adrenaline of anger incited by tough subject matter.

It's a mechanism for survival, a cathartic release not unlike getting in a mosh pit for a few rounds. The fact that Moore could share tough stories of suffering and personal challenge while having a bit of fun with people was inspiring. That also reminds me of Abbie Hoffman, a radical war protestor from the 1960s who used humor and creativity to protest for peace. As a filmmaker and a theater aficionado, I see a certain kind of value in using contrasting emotions to evoke moving epiphanies. Like I said before, these in-between spaces are where we thrive—between dangerous and cool, angry and funny, passionate or apathetic, dejected or inspired, free or bound by our own chains—all at the same time.

**David:** The band is also involved in ongoing media campaigns, too, from film to web



DAVID ENSINGER

platforms—like tackling Native American issues, on First Nation turf—and has even tapped into the PBS network to reach millions. Some punks may criticize your use of a dominant media apparatus in such a way, but do you think punks should look to public television as an alternative medium to create meaningful change and dialog, rather than simply using rather limited DIY networks?

**Sophie:** We realized that when we were talking about social issues in our songs, we were preaching to the choir, no matter how big the show was. We knew that most punks already felt the same way that we did about the issues we were talking about, such as marginalized communities, environmental issues, corporate politics, et cetera.

The next step was to take these statements of protest to the masses, to make a bigger impact. We wanted to give a big microphone to those marginalized communities, to give them a voice to share their stories directly, and television gave us that opportunity. We're working on a number of films right now, and we hope that the broadcasts will reach as many people as we can. The most recent one about uranium mining in the four corners, *Yellow Fever—Uncovering the Navajo Uranium Legacy*, went out to sixty million homes on 137 PBS stations, four times in two years. We only hope that by creating documentary films for television, we

inspire others outside the punk scene to get involved in social causes in some way.

**David:** Also, band member projects have tackled issues in Africa and Portugal, at least partly because of a sense of punk rock refusal, regarding rampant racism, environmental abuse, corruption, and consumerism. How can punk bands tip the scales, reverse the flow, or combat Trumpian times by being proactive?

**Sophie:** We feel that under oppressive regimes like those of Trump or Enrique Peña Nieto (Mexico), people need to feel like there is hope and solidarity. They need to both fight for change and nourish their own communities. We've had more people protesting than ever before in the U.S. Perhaps issues that have long plagued this nation will have attention given to them now that things are at this extreme, such as election finance reform and rampant lobbying. Punks in Indonesia helped to inspire a revolution in 1998 when Suharto was deposed by continuing to be vocal and standing up. Persistence, people!

Also, there are hopeful messages to be shared about other communities who have empowered themselves in difficult times, such as Mexican women activists empowering abused sex workers, Burmese punks who serve homeless elders, and the numerous Food Not Bombs groups around the globe. When Fukushima's nuclear disaster loomed, punks in Japan rejected warnings by the government and decided to save the lives of citizens in the city center when authorities abandoned them.

The Zapatistas in Mexico have laid down their revolutionary arms and built schools and hospitals, creating their own example of how an empowered community can thrive. They now have their own female presidential candidate, María de Jesús Patricio (an indigenous Nahua activist chosen to represent the National Indigenous Congress in the 2018 national election) preparing to run against the hated Peña Nieto. And our films examine the various ways regular people can protest and create positive change. In Cameroon, West Africa, we helped build a community radio station with a local activist and made a film about the fight for education. The project is called Radio Taboo, and it is on the air now. In Portugal, we are creating a documentary that explores ways regular people are protesting against exploitative oil extraction approaching their pristine beaches.

All this work towards positively empowering us, and our communities, while setting an example to authorities and to regular people what compassion and humanity can look like.

Oh, and we also need to vote or get involved in politics. Go, take over the system. I know this is controversial—and some punks will not agree with voting and participating in a system that is fucked up in so many ways—but we believe it is important to make our voices heard, however we can. As a band, we make fun of politicians and the broken system; however, we also speak to hope, progress, and social change. Not voting only disempowers the movement and empowers



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## WE ONLY HOPE WE INSPIRE OTHERS OUTSIDE THE PUNK SCENE TO GET INVOLVED IN SOCIAL CAUSES.

the madmen. Look what happened when Bernie supporters decided not to vote for Hillary.

**David:** Your emphasis on persistence and resilience is all-important. Even as a teacher, I have struggled for years. What do you think is the best way to trigger, nurture, or reveal another person's persistence?

**Sophie:** I think some people need to be inspired or outraged to take action, though sometimes they come in the same package. Do we need rage and/or fear to inspire us to have a long term to fight for something? Could we merely be excited? I don't think so.

I think speaking to people with their priorities and perspective in mind while encouraging them to do more for what they believe in has been our M.O. over the years. In each town or country, we try to learn about the issues there and include local concerns in-between songs or talk about the song in relation to a local issue, so we are giving fuel to their fire, hoping to relate and give catharsis.

To foster persistence, I would say modeling is definitely important. People need a vision to believe in. Martin Luther King, Abbie Hoffman, Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela all inspire us all to be stronger people in the name of humanity and show what is possible with dedication.

Regular American mom Erin Brockovich was driven to direct action by anger and necessity, while a suburban teen could be acting from a place of frustration and disempowerment. Everyone has their boiling point.

Charles Mackay, a Scottish poet and author, once wrote, "Men, it has been well said, think in herds; it will be seen that they

go mad in herds, while they only recover their senses slowly, one by one."

**David:** What was your boiling point? Were you triggered by a song, a gig, an event at school, or a time in your personal history?

**Sophie:** There was a poor, nearly blind woman I met in Mexico when I was ten years old; witnessing deforestation in the name of McDonald's burgers in Brazil when I was fourteen; and marching in student protests for lower school fees in Argentina at sixteen. In fact, that's when I decided to become a filmmaker to attempt to relate some of the inspiration I had experienced there. I was blown away when I found Rage Against The Machine. It was the first angry political music I connected with. Having been hit hard by the weight of the world outside of the American media bubble, I was handing out flyers against McDonald's before I found punk rock.

**David:** Like Dave from MDC, your band witnessed and conveyed what was happening in places like Myanmar and Indonesia—punk free libraries, rape centers, food distribution, care for the elderly—but both bands also saw harassment and police surveillance. Dave mentioned Sharia law (in Indonesia) as being one reason—do you agree, or were there multiple factors that punks were dealing with?

**Sophie:** Punks who are speaking out in countries that have authoritarian regimes are offering a hopeful vision of resistance to others. Not surprisingly, they have to deal with some backlash. For instance, in Malaysia, DIY venues have been raided and organizers hauled away to jail for being anarchists, others for wearing black metal T-shirts. In Indonesia, a political ruse led to

sixty-five punks being beaten, their mohawks shaved, and sent off to re-education camps. This was in the only province that operates under Sharia law. In Myanmar, a picture of the band Rebel Riot, each band member in another religious garb, led to retribution from authorities. In Mexico, you can be arrested and killed by the government for protesting in the streets.

Censorship is commonplace in some parts of the world. It used to be illegal to mosh in Singapore and punks there can be arrested and detained for posters, songs, or even flipping the bird on stage. We had to send in our lyrics and videos to get our visas to play in China and Singapore, which was worrisome. MDC became Millions of Dead "Crops" on Chinese posters and promotions. We couldn't send in any of our more serious songs, which left only a few to share.

These punks don't live in places where freedom of speech is something that can be taken for granted. That doesn't stop them. We played a great fest in Jakarta called Ponti Fest where many merch tables were full of empowering zines, feminist literature, and farmer's rights pamphlets in various languages. A punk-supported rape crisis center was a major participant. For many in the "developed" world, punk rock can be a social and intellectual refuge, a community to connect with on many levels. In the developing world, punks are fighting a more visceral battle, pushing for better conditions in their communities, working to fight poverty, discrimination, and corruption every day just by being there.

**David:** In the end, whether you're scaling monuments in Mexico or seeing the street affairs of Malaysia, how do non-punk locals see you—just slightly weird Americans or part of a punk counterculture?

**Sophie:** We mostly think we look like weird Americans to many regular passer-bys. Luckily, we do have a trilingual band, so we can communicate well in Thai and Spanish-speaking places. Some people have never seen punks before and are excited to take photos together. Usually, wherever we go, we're certainly a curiosity, if nothing else. We stand in solidarity with punk communities all over the world who work together to create change, inspire each other, and collaborate. To them, we're all in the same global family. We don't know if we're changing anything, but at least we're trying, and that's satisfying on its own. We've found punks from India, Southeast Asia, Mexico, Europe, Russia, Columbia, Australia, and all over the world willing to take us in and play music, celebrate the spirit of punk rock, and fight to make a difference. We have yet to tour all those places, but just you wait...

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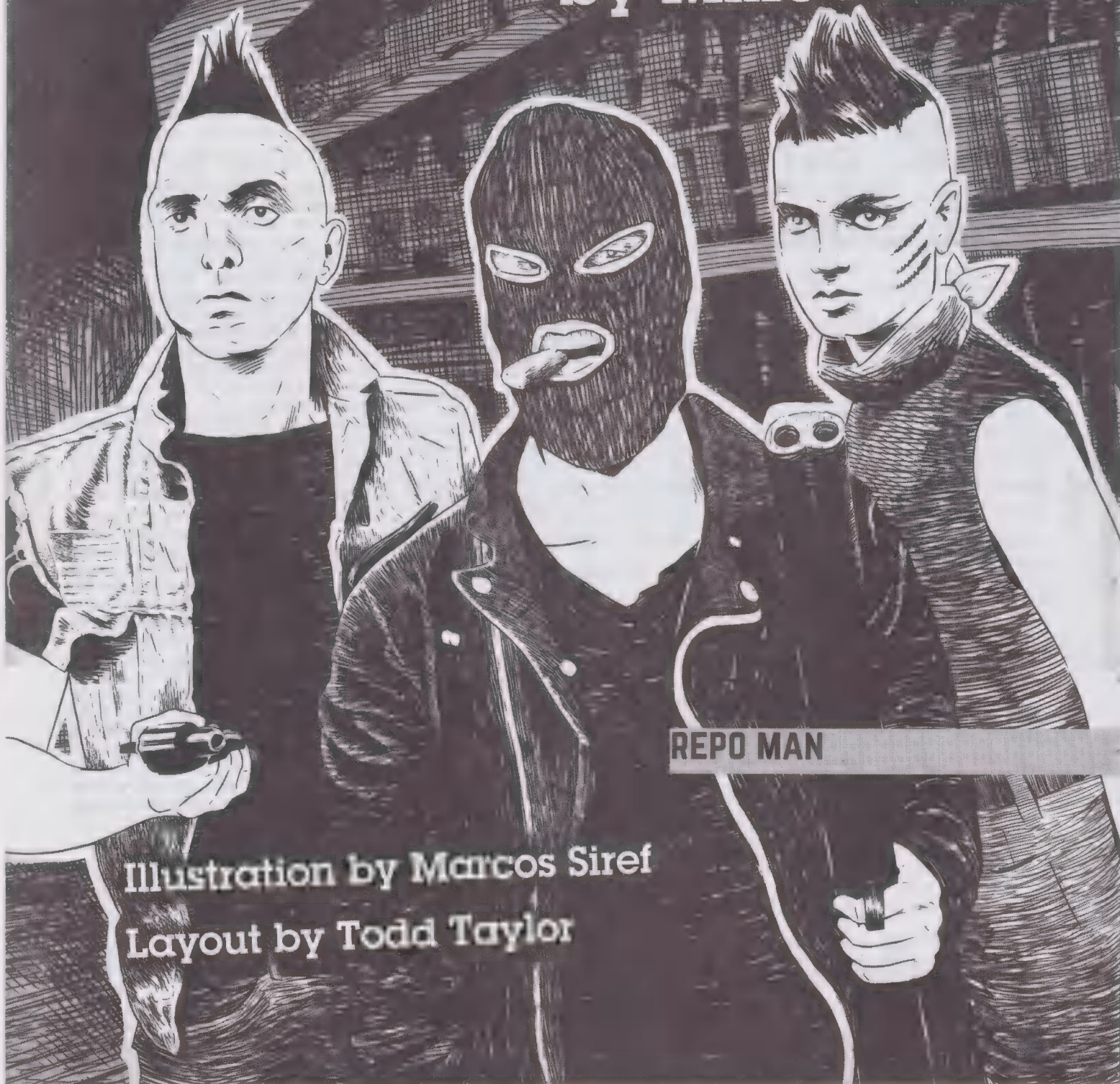


HAZOPRANK 41



# one punk's movie guide

by Mike Plante



REPO MAN

Illustration by Marcos Siref

Layout by Todd Taylor



I owe everything to movies. Film festival work pays the bills and making a film is fun. But **PUNK ROCK MOVIES TAUGHT ME ABOUT THE WORLD AND LET ME KNOW I WASN'T INSANE**. To be fair, cinema has always been proud of its rebellion, but you connect most to what was around you as a kid. I wish something like the guide below was around then, but if you want something that doesn't exist, you have to create it. I tried to keep this relatively easy to find the films (in our sad, sad age of no video stores besides the odd, lucky holdout). Many of the films are available for streaming, rent, or sale online. Some are just underground enough to pop up for free in places. And don't get rid of your DVD and Blu-Ray players.

I wanted to make an overview that's a fun mix for any generational fan of punk. If you're old and creaky like me, you know most of the golden oldies, but there are always one or two great discoveries that slipped through, ready to finally check out. This is a compilation of films that don't have punk music, but a punk ethos. I tried to fill it with lesser-known gems you might not have seen that will either reestablish or uphold your faith.

And if you're younger and know there must be a huge archive of cool shit from the past to check out, this is a great diving board. I generally stayed away from concert films. Those are pretty easy to find if you're searching for a band you like. I tried to stick with movie-movies and documentaries.

## THE FOUNDATIONS ('70s-'80s)

### *Another State of Mind* (1984)

This tour doc was filmed in '82 and follows Social Distortion and Youth Brigade. It's well made and captures an important part of the second wave of punk in the early 80s, showing hard work and optimism will get you far—but so many other parts of the system (clubs, money, even the bus) will still fuck things up. Tons of great moments and insight, including one of the most perfect punk happenings—Minor Threat is playing a show, the club hates it and takes the P.A. and mics away, so the band plays anyway and the entire crowd sings all the lyrics to the songs. Take that, rock'n'roll.

### *The Blank Generation* (1976)

Of the two punk films with this title, this is the one to watch. Amos Poe and Ivan Kral were deep in the scene in New York in the '70s and captured a lot of essential bands on super-8 film and later made a sorta-concert movie from it. Alas—without sync sound, so it's odd. This brings up a weird factoid as I looked for films for this guide: While some of the major scenes in other cities are captured in docs on-the-spot, at least in London (*D.O.A.*), Los Angeles (*Decline*), and San Francisco (Target Video), there doesn't seem to be a definitive NYC punk doc made in the '70s. These are home movies with music added later, and there is a charm to it. Just don't look for deep interviews. That comes later in some great docs, such as "Looking Back with Anger."

### *Border Radio* (1987)

This was a project four years in the making by co-directors Allison Anders, Dean Lent, and Kurt Voss. It stars and was co-written by John Doe, Chris D., and other L.A. punk citizens. *Border* may be the first film that shows self-reflection of the scene and its players, capturing the end of that first L.A. punk wave as it transitioned into the mainstream (for lack of a better world) as actors and writers, or into bands that would actually get airtime. The characters fully know the best days are long gone and that it was time to evolve into a different kind of artist. They try to figure it all out in the drifting plot. *Border* doesn't wallow in nostalgia, but like many of the better punk fiction films you get the idea that the people involved were part of what they were portraying and it's interesting to see this period of time.

### *Class of 1984* (1982)

A classic exploitation film. I tried to stay away from too many of these because they suck. If you know that going in, then you have the right expectations. When I was fourteen, this was probably my dream world, as the punks take over the high school with maximum rage. Actually, when this came out, I was twelve, and then when I went to

high school in '84, I broke my back skiing and was put in a body cast. So things don't quite play out like the movies, dammit.

### *The Complete Truth About De-Evolution* (1976-1990)

**FUTURE THINKERS DEVO ALWAYS WON GOLD FOR THE STYLE OLYMPICS**, not just because they were making short films years before music videos were normal but because of the films themselves. This covers the original brain-damaged films from the Akron early years through the big, famous times. The lyrics are smart, the music is great, and the images are hilarious. Their brand of satire was so pitch perfect that you get tricked into learning how weird the human race is. It's analogous to the way a satirical war film is always far more scary and insightful than a serious one. Also includes the great *Mongoloid* short film by Bruce Conner, the grandfather of music videos.

### *The Cramps Live at Napa State Mental Hospital* (1984)

**IS THIS THE MOST PUNK SHOW EVER?** One of the most iconic bands of the scene, the slithering geniuses known as The Cramps, reworked underground rockabilly, rock, and country classics into their own mystery plane, driven by the steamroller couple of our era, Lux Interior and Poison Ivy. With no irony and no prisoners taken, every sweaty Cramps' live show you can find online is worth a watch. But this one is next level. The hospital did have various nights of bands playing over the years (and SF's The Mutants also played this gig), but can you imagine anyone pulling this off today? The patients, of course, fit in to punk's style of outsider fans, but usually the crowd is in the know (a few of the bands' friends attended but it was mostly patients). So this is even more pure when looking for the outside of society. The Cramps play a great set of their best songs and fit in perfectly. Joe filmed it with one of the first portable video cameras that only did B&W and raw sound, which really amps up the moody look—**IT'S LIKE TELEPATHY FROM MARS**. What's funny is it's not crazier than the usual punk show, with people coming up on stage and trying to take the mic away, acting like they're having a seizure. But the aura is weird. The hospital's citizens dance and seem to love the band. Lux loves them right back in a genuine way: "...somebody told me you people are crazy, but I'm not so sure about that. You seem to be all right to me."

### *The Decline of Western Civilization* (1981)

While it feels like the apex of the Los Angeles punk scene, *Decline* might actually capture the end of the first wave of L.A., as rampant violence and the mainstream music industry quickly ate it up. But it has some of the best punk moments on film, between energetic performances and long interviews with some of the best bands of the time. The pure humanity of the kids really comes through and gave me something to believe in when I saw it at age fourteen, a few years after it was made. Many young fans give honest thoughts about growing up fucked up. Even most of the bands are fucked up kids in their early twenties. If you grew up far from London, New York, or Los Angeles, you may have felt trapped. Then, if the world is fair, you see something like *Decline*, directed by Penelope Spheeris. Crazy-living punks like Darby (Germs), Exene (X), and Dukowski (Black Flag) spout out what society really means and why we should fight against it at times. They're beautiful poets, but they're also real people you can relate to. They drink and are messy and make mistakes in life. **RECOGNIZING THE WORLD FOR WHAT IT IS DOESN'T SAVE YOU FROM IT—BUT YOU CAN MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO STAY SANE AND HAVE FUN.**

The filmmaking is perfect for the tone. It feels so urgent with great 16mm camerawork. And it's better than the usual music doc. There are full songs. Subtitles of the lyrics show it's not about coke and cars, but actual meaning, frustration, and poetry. The stylish interviews with the punk kids (one bright light bulb) feel dramatic for a moment, but then become fun.

Every generation has its version of messed up teens/delinquents, but I still think true misfit punk rock kids and bands had the most to say with the least amount of bullshit. About half of the bands include women—another positive to the scene—as Exene and The Germs' manager Nicole Panter have some of the most lucid thoughts about being punk rock. The film is still as compelling as ever, and there are



# You've seen the story before with teen angst, shit parents, and cautious bands selling out. But it's done so well here.

enough positive moments to still get me inspired to be creative and question authority.

It's worth it to buy ■ player for the new Blu-Ray box set. After waiting all these decades for ■ good copy and lost footage, it doesn't disappoint. New transfers look and sound great (for punk). The best extras include ■■ amazing walk through the closed-down Masque with Brendan Mullen on camera; new/old footage of songs not in the film by Fear, The Germs, and The Gears (the one band filmed but not in the finished film); audio commentary through the film with Spheeris and her daughter Anna Fox, who supervised the restoration and Blu-Ray release; and the band interviews with Black Flag, Darby, and X, unedited in their full form. There are also interviews with Mullen, Nicole Panter, and the light bulb kids. So much cool extra footage. For deep fans, it's like getting another punk film in all its time capsule glory. The doc does a good job humanizing the bands as real people, but the long interviews really give you further insight as well as some more fun moments.

The one extra that's oddly the most fun is the full "attention" announcements from each band. A necessary statement for film legality sets the tone perfectly, as the punks are asked to enforce authority—through a punk filter.

## **Desperate Teenage Lovedolls (1984)**

Filmmaker Dave Markey caught some great footage of the punk scene in L.A., often on luscious super-8 film. He's made a lot of docs but also a couple of fiction films like *DTL* and its sequel. This isn't the film to watch to learn about the danger of fame, but to have fun watching some kids making a DIY movie with charming amateur acting and good music. It's basically ■ landscape film, too, ■ perfect time capsule from the street of all the clothes and buildings.

## **D.O.A.: A Rite of Passage (1980)**

One of the most important punk docs can now be seen in a better version than your old bootlegged VHS tape after being restored and released to theaters and DVD in 2017. Until the great doc *The Filth and the Fury* came out in 2000, this was the best way to learn the Sex Pistols' story on film, and it's complicated.

You got to see the legendary U.K. club shows you heard about and feel the energy and importance. And then you see the doomed U.S. tour the band played through the southern states before imploding in San Francisco at their last show.

In the middle is ■■ epic interview with Sid and Nancy, which is not informative, but ■ stark look into sad junkie life. All this is complicated because it feels like it's looking from the outside in, even with Sid, because he's too wasted to complete a sentence. What was happening behind the scenes is fascinating and clearly explained in *Filth*, but you should watch this first to get a real emotional sense of the scene in all its blood and guts on 16mm film.

Besides the powerful footage of the Pistols in full, subtitled-lyric glory, there's a lot more to enjoy. Tons of show footage of great bands that never got as much screen time (especially X-Ray Spex and Sham 69). Lots of fan interviews (is this where that staple started?) with two important audiences. The U.K. youth are interesting, ■ they have their specific experiences in that country as working class. But it's the southern U.S. crowds that are more fascinating, as they're true weirdos and curiosity seekers, stuck in what had to be the most non-punk scenes possible.

By the end, it works in the way many political and social issue docs succeed. The scene started to fight problems, both in society and in music. Incredible energy and deep motivation created ■ vibrant

## **Ladies and Gentlemen, The Fabulous Stains**

moment with great promise. A few benefitted and really changed things. In the end for Sid and the Pistols, it's melancholic, not just from the lost youth, but much of the horror-future they predicted would be here.

## **Fast Times at Ridgemont High (1982)**

One of the films I'm sure you know, but it's time to re-watch it. Holds up incredibly well over time, and as an adult you realize how fucking amazing this is. You'd think it would be a '70s sex comedy or ■ soap opera that's harsh and revealing—but *Fast Times* feels sooooo real, showing the mess that is high school with complete honesty. The awkwardness of young love is sweet, charming, and fun, and then fucking terrifying when the creepy predator dudes show up. Director Amy Heckerling didn't leave out the tough moments, dealing with sex and abortion in a candid way most films don't try to touch. Of course, there's still the overwhelming factor of Spicoli, which might make you remember the film in the wrong way. The film is still hilarious, after you stop thinking, "Holy shit, that's Sean Penn." The great acting and characters are bigger and better than just the stoner comedy, though. This will save your kid more than any D.A.R.E. video could hope to.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen, The Fabulous Stains (1981)**

A group of young women start a band in the face of opposition. They push through the bullshit that is the music industry, fight misogyny, trends, and expectations, and achieve a failed success as the system eats the band up. Yet, they prove an inspiration for other young girls to be creative individuals.

The big Hollywood studio Paramount didn't try to make ■ punk masterpiece. But that's just what *Fabulous Stains* ends up being. The pieces are odd—screenwriter Nancy Dowd (credited as a Rob Morton) also wrote the nasty but hilarious *Slap Shot* and won ■ Academy Award for co-writing the sensitive Vietnam drama *Coming Home*. She knew how to make vibrant characters in ■ world you want to watch. Director Lou Adler had only directed Cheech and Chong's *Up in Smoke*, which has some punk ethics. But he had a long, successful history in the music business as ■ record producer with The Mamas And The Papas and Carole King, among others, and knew how the system operated. The actors are a wild mix of incredible movie talents—including Diane Lane, Christine Lahti, Laura Dern, and Ray Winstone—and actual legendary punk rockers. The main band in the film behind Winstone is Steve Jones, Paul Simonon, and Paul Cook.

You've seen the story before with teen angst, shit parents, and cautious bands selling out. But it's done so well here—from the performances, to the music, to the message—that it's worth all the hype. Of course, much of the hype is from the studio wimping out and trying to stop anyone from seeing the film, reshooting the ending, and barely releasing it to theaters. It became ■ bootleg hit in the '80s and '90s and popped up on late night TV, making it even more special.

## **Made in Britain (1983)**

The great U.K. director Alan Clarke made movies for television, often around England's working class social issues, all being realistic dramas with powerful acting. This has Tim Roth as a Nazi skinhead, exploring not only his faults, but the fucked system that won't help to change him. Also highly recommended are Clarke's other angry youth films *Scum* (1979) and *The Firm* (1989).





## PENELOPE SPHEERIS

### *Out of the Blue* (1980)

Dennis Hopper was hired to star and ended up directing this lost classic of weirdness, right at the end of his dangerous days post-*Apocalypse Now* and before he cleaned up and was reborn into *Blue Velvet*. Linda Manz, the truly strange cool kid from *Days of Heaven* and *The Wanderers*, plays his daughter who cares more about Johnny and Sid than her deadbeat dad. Things get really strange, but just watching Dennis and Linda move and talk is worth the price of admission. It's a weird atmosphere that's hard to come by. The Pointed Sticks from Vancouver pop up with kickass energy. It's better than exploitation, but still pretty druggy.

### *Over the Edge* (1979)

Did Matt Dillon even have parents? It's like he just stood up out of the gutter one day, combusting into the universe. Outta control teens go wild, proving that suburban neighborhoods are worse than downtown—not a film full of punk rockers as much as they are little punks. Reckless teen stories go back to the 1930s at least, when teenagers were invented by child labor laws, not having to go work in a factory at ten, or at least they could finish high school before getting drafted. So this one isn't the first, but it's the best that came out at the time and felt symbiotic with the punk life being created then. In his first film, Matt Dillon started a career of playing this character, because it's pretty cool. Lots of the cast was found by going to schools and grabbing kids who were skipping class. **THE FILM WAS HARD TO FIND FOR A LONG TIME, BECAUSE DISTRIBUTORS WERE SCARED IT WOULD START RIOTS, THEN IT GAINED FANS ON LATE NIGHT TV. ADULTS ARE SO DUMB.**

### *Repo Man* (1984)

Besides a killer soundtrack, *Repo Man* is a time capsule of the '80s. Disenfranchised, suburban youth decompose in a big city's downtown, stealing pills and cars for fun and money. It's full of conspiracy theories, aliens, "dianetix," time machines, the FBI, and other reasons why the world is out of our hands. The terrifying, imminent nuclear war. John Wayne came to the door in a dress.

This movie is so quotable, the commentary track on the DVD is 75% of the cast and crew saying the lines along with the film and laughing.

Today, the film resonates even more. The late, great Harry Dean

Stanton plays Bud, an aging repo man with plans to retire. He thinks he understands the world looking from the street up. "No commies in my car... No Christians, either!" Then-lesser-known Emilio Estevez plays Otto, a young punker who hates the world and takes up a repo gig for money. The amazing character actor Tracey Walter plays Miller, the only one of the repo staff who doesn't drive. He thinks he sees the whole world for what it is, with UFOs as time machines and a plate of shrimp connecting all of society.

Director Alex Cox does not make it romantic. It's a comedy and political satire. While the punk kids are ready to fight the system, they also have no direction on how to do that. They rob and pillage, but do the drugs they steal. The rich, government-running bad guys in the film also believe in aliens, but they think they deserve them as a chosen group. The only true revolutionaries in the film are the Latinx characters from East L.A., who have been fucked by the system since day one.

Otto has the clearest vision of all, as an observer swept up by the repo culture. He never sees himself as better than anyone else. He'll do the drugs and he doesn't treat friends that nice, but he also knows the world is totally nuts. When an old friend gets shot in a robbery, he tells Otto he blames society for making him a villain. Otto says that's bullshit—he's just a suburban punk like Otto.

The Criterion Collection release has great extras, tons of deleted scenes, new interviews with everyone involved, and a hilarious TV version of the film, where they say, "Flip you" a lot.

### *Return of the Living Dead* (1985)

My reluctance to include lame exploitation that happens to feature some punk-looking characters is *not* happening here—*Return* is amazing! About one second after punk rock became notorious, filmmakers tried to shoehorn it into fiction films. It worked with *Repo Man* because Alex Cox actually liked the music and understood what the scene was talking about, and mixed it into a sci-fi genre comedy. Here, the comedy genre totally works, too. Maybe horror is the perfect genre for punk. Plenty of great bands like The Misfits and The Cramps borrowed almost everything from '50s and '60s horror movies. In turn, the best horror secretly made political statements against society and racism. So it's kind of perfect that *Return* is a pseudo-sequel to



# "I don't think the punks believe in hate that much..."

—Jerry Roach, club owner, *Urban Struggle*

the lo-fi *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), ■ punk-before-punk movie with stark DIY skills and strong political undertones, one of the best ever. *Return* has more comedy on the surface in the same way *Repo* does, but also great effects to make the horror pay off with things zombies never did before. Classic character actors deliver the goods and ■ cool soundtrack fills the movie. There's ■ punk method to the madness: Once again, it's the greedy big corporations that are going to fuck up the whole planet. Timeless.

## **Rock 'n' Roll High School (1979)**

The Ramones in person! Another school-takeover juvenile delinquent film, and this one is the most fun. While most of the teensploitation flicks get deep into violence and try *reallilly* hard to shock you, *RNRHS* just wants to make you laugh. There's a plot and it moves fast, as Riff Randall (played by P.J. Soles) falls in love with the Ramones, tries to meet them, and destroys the school. It actually works out. America's punk boys and girls in turn fell in love with P.J. Soles.

## **Sid ■ Nancy (1986)**

For what it's worth, this is a movie with actors and not a documentary with recreations. On one hand, it changes some events for poetic license and that's touchy, 'cause lots of audiences get their history through movies. You can't overlook that, as it's not ■ completely surreal vision of the story. On the other hand, the acting is amazing, and it takes the approach that Sid and Nancy acted like they were in a movie in daily life, or at least ■ overboard, annoying soap opera. Many of the scenes don't work for me with this soapy vibe, but you can glean the humanity of two young adults caught up in the mess. I have deep respect for writer/director Alex Cox and all his works, and am happy a film can start discussions about what it was all for, as punk ideals often sink into rock fantasies.

## **Smithereens (1982)**

Wren is a New Jersey new wave girl, trying to make it in New York City. She's somehow charming, yet really annoying. It's going badly with no money or place to live. She stays with a guy who has ■ van, but she's in love with ■ local rocker played by Richard Hell. That's ■ bad choice, too. They all scheme on how to move to L.A., where the punk scene just moved. Susan Seidelman's first film is full of raw filmmaking and it's great, with a perspective that's fresher than the usual macho male viewpoint from the '70s. The acting and atmosphere raises the film above its amateur status for some funny scenes and honest reflection on goal setting. Original soundtrack by The Feelies is minimalist gold. Filming completely in real locations, Seidelman captures the shitty '70s New York people seem to want back.

## **Suburbia (1984)**

The ultimate punk rock B-movie, which should play with *RNR High School* in drive-ins. After her underground hit doc *Decline*, Penelope Spheeris made *Suburbia*, ■ fictional movie that feels like real life. Oh, it's got bad acting and some cheeseball plot twists, but the kids feel like real kids put in ■ movie and the desperate California world didn't feel like ■ set. We follow ■ group of runaway punk rock kids forced to the streets as they bond into a family unit, protecting each other and fighting the man. It's pretty funny in parts, and the dramatic moments can be overboard but meaningful. The gift this film has is honesty. Ultimately, the kids ■ as human and flawed ■ many of the parents, making fun of people who don't deserve it, doing petty crimes, and getting wasted. They just don't have jobs or houses they need to maintain for appearances.

The world is complicated. *Suburbia* runs the tightrope between exploitation and sensitive teen portrayal. One kid runs away because

his dad is gay, another because his stepdad is ■ black cop. Even in the '80s, that seemed awkward and dumb. But then the black cop becomes the most sensible, positive character in the film. Another time, a girl is attacked and shamed at ■ show with her clothes ripped off and everyone screaming at her, a dumb drive-in movie cliché. Later in the film, the runaways gallantly fight back against ■ dad who sexually abused one of the girls. The great Roger Corman paid for half of the film. He loved artistic foreign films, but made hundreds of exploitation films with shock values, and some of that double life shows up here. Corman was also the only producer in the U.S. with real money and resources to give women jobs as writers and directors on a regular basis, and Spheeris was rightly established ■ ■ talented filmmaker.

As most punk fiction films of the time, *Suburbia* captures some great band performances with better-than-usual image and sound. This time it's T.S.O.L., The Vandals, and D.I. in live "shows" made for the movie that are great.

## **Target Video**

Target Video—started in 1977 in San Francisco by video artist Joe Rees and co-founders Jill Hoffman and Jackie Sharp to make a "new type of television"—captured artists and bands on videotape, which probably felt more punk and DIY than film at the time. The footage was originally for a show on public access TV and later became a long release of VHS tapes. The collection of videos made by Target is essential. While mostly performances, their series of tape releases are ■ bedrock document of punk bands of the '70s and '80s across a pretty wide spectrum of what "punk" stood for in the early days. You have the lighter stuff that I'm always surprised is called punk when it's soft rock, but I do connect with the ethos and the artistic DIY style of those bands. You have the intense hardcore at the other end of the punk spirit and a whole lot of fascinating personalities in between.

Target caught great live performances and also had bands play in their studio with solid recording equipment. Each tape felt so urgent that even the trailers at the end were hints of gold you had to search out, which is hopefully easier now with the internet. Target also had ■ great knack for capturing the unique moments: **CRIME PLAYING ■ SAN QUENTIN PRISON (IT'S ONE THING WHEN IT'S A FAMOUS COUNTRY SINGER AND SOMETHING ELSE WHEN IT'S AN UNDERGROUND PUNK BAND IN COP UNIFORMS AND SUNGLASSES)**, a news report about Jello Biafra running for mayor, The Mutants doing ■ free show for deaf kids, art-robot destruction by Survival Research Laboratories, and The Screamers, who wanted to make videos not records. And then there is this video....

## **Urban Struggle (1981)**

Short, black-and-white 16mm doc about legendary club The Cuckoo's Nest south of Los Angeles, where Orange County beach punks showed up to party, much to the dismay of the cowboy bar next door. Incredible live footage and interviews from all the people involved, from the owner to the early bands and the fans, exploring the scene and the violent rednecks. Not long enough, but there was ■ follow-up doc in the last ten years (see later in this guide). This short is just as raw and, on the heels of *Decline*, a perfect companion piece. "The hippies, I don't think really believed in love that much, and I don't think the punks believe in hate that much..." —Jerry Roach, club owner

There's a feature doc follow-up called *Clockwork Orange County* (2012), although it spreads out beyond the club to profile punk culture and bands in Orange County and the beaches. Lots of talking heads, but plenty of the right folks and the stories are fantastic; great insight.





## ROCK'N'ROLL HIGH SCHOOL

### **Wire—On the Box (Live at Rockpalast 1979)**

Not ■ doc so much as a well-produced TV show and long interview, but essential. Rockpalast was started in 1974 and is still a German TV show with all kinds of rock and jazz bands performing. This episode captures Wire at blazing speed, already with some fame and notoriety (“We don’t take requests.”). The live versions are much different than the recorded versions, of course, but they’re so tight and energetic that you get something special. As much ■ I love ■ messed-up video image and stark sound, every once in a while you’d like the time travel treasure hunt to result in some perfect image, sound, and editing. And then the band is amazing too! Makes me cry.

### **X: The Unheard Music (1986)**

Great filmmaking follows the lovable X as they release their new album *Under the Big Black Sun*. Reflect on the past and enjoy the present. Way more vibrant than the usual doc about a band, this film is inventive. One sequence of old punk photos ■■ scanned during one song. “The Unheard Music” plays over ■■ incredible sequence of ■ house being moved by a semi through the streets of L.A. late at night. The filmmakers set up cameras at different street corners and inside the house itself, staring out the windows ■■ the city creeps by. Delving into the business of it all, X the documentary observes the often ridiculous music industry.

Maybe it’s not ■ surprise; the film is more cohesive than usual, as X was older and seemed to have their shit together compared to younger, wilder bands in the scene. We see X in their own houses, giving a peek into their personalities. Live shows are covered with actual good sound and lighting. There’s also ■ nice acoustic rendition of a Hank Williams song by Exene and Doe. Billy Zoom gets deep about scooters. Bonebrake does ■■ incredible display of how to keep a beat with all four extremities. It’s good to have a happy doc about ■ band in the mix, encouraging the rest of us to be creative.

### **PUNK’S NOT DEAD**

#### ***We made it past Reagan!***

Films made in the ‘90s and beyond, about what was happening right in front of the camera.

#### ***Better Than Something (2011)***

Jay Reatard embodied ■ pure punk spirit. Growing up poor in Memphis, he was an outsider who took his band name from what bullies called him, recorded his first songs on a 4-track with one track broken, playing guitar and hitting plastic pails ‘cause he couldn’t afford drums. He never praised himself even though he had a huge output of music and bands with an incredibly consistent high quality of rage and riffs. He also fucked up a lot, broke friendships as much as equipment, and died much too young. This documentary is almost all him talking about his music and life. It’s fun—with crazy stories plus old footage—but also insightful about what drives us to create and care about music.

#### ***The Decline of Western Civilization III (1998)***

Since the second film in the *Decline* series was about metal, this feels like the true follow-up to the original, both made by Penelope Spheeris. This time it’s ■ much different structure, with more time devoted to the fans. The L.A. punk scene was twenty years in at that point, and ■ new generation embraced it as a tested way of life. But life on the streets of Hollywood didn’t get easier. While the world advances in technology and tolerance, plenty of young adults are still on the outside of society to the point of being homeless. There are fewer bands this time and they’re good, but the movie’s more about adapting punk to their modern lives. Punk has always come from desperation, but did anyone really expect it to last? Spheeris explores



# An amazing good time as teen girls in 1980s Sweden tell everyone with normal hair and clothes to fuck off, and then start a band because they can't play and no one wants to

## *We Are the Best!*

punk ideals and changing times in new interviews with Flea, Keith Morris, and Rick Wilder from the Mau Maus.

### *Fugazi: Instrument (1998)*

It's hard to make a doc about a band; it helps to film one for ten years. *Instrument* shows what an amazing documentary about a great band can be—as exciting and artistic as the band is. A solid mix of here's-what-happened stories along with beautiful film and video footage of live shows across the years. Filmmaker Jem Cohen is also from DC and has been lifelong friends with the band, so there's that inherent trust that would be hard to get from an outsider dropping in with a camera. This feels like family. Jem's style of dreamy street photography fits perfectly with the band.

Fugazi walked the walk, doing benefits, keeping shows affordable, and staying consistent in songwriting. Just the most successful band in our lifetime. And there are plenty of human moments and laughs throughout the film; people expect them to be monks or something. But as Ian says, "Fugazi is about being a band."

### *Hype! (1996)*

Now is an interesting time to re-watch Doug Pray's landmark film about the Seattle scene. It's good to remember the '90s pop culture insanity of the grunge era also includes a lot of great punk bands that started in the '80s. Everyone in Seattle was well aware of the impending doom the music industry brings—and did unleash—on any band that was simply from the area, to the point where the city name was on the magazine cover without the particular band names. Eddie Vedder admits so much of the success they got should've included many important bands that came before them. But we can't control major labels, much less what people will buy. Anyway, the doc is fun and reminded me of a lot of bands I liked beyond The Melvins and Nirvana. Plus, it shows the real community and cool people that have always been there, before and after the rest of the world cares.

### *Kids (1995)*

That this film was so shocking when it came out was strange then. It definitely captures serious issues in a realistic way, but we all knew (or were) these kinds of kids, from every generation. Fucking around, getting wasted, skating... The music would change a bit with the times, the clothes, the size of the wheels; but essentially the drama of wasted youth rang the same bell from the '40s on. Films got better over the decades—or maybe more realistic with less censorship holding them back—at portraying so-called juvenile delinquents to where it felt more like a home movie: handheld camera, more natural dialogue, et cetera. Punk fiction movies always seem to have non-actors involved and are inspired by real events. I think that's one of the best things about them: the honesty. Plus, they always have reviews or really hilarious TV news coverage talking about the dangers of showing them in theaters. From the edgy minds of Harmony Korine and Larry Clark, *Kids* now rides the line of time capsule and modern drug scare film, in a good way, and it still feels vital and alive. It also has the unfortunate cliché many of these flicks do, where some of the non-actors faced tragedy in the real world.

### *Kurt Cobain: About a Son (2006)*

Of course, there are a ton of films about Nirvana. However, I would guess Kurt might like this one. All the audio is from Michael

Azerrad's taped interviews with Kurt talking about his life over newly filmed footage of all the places he lived and talks about. It's a beautiful, personal portrait that gets to the heart of the real person.

### *The Punk Singer (2013)*

The life and times of '90s punk icon Kathleen Hanna, from her outspoken days in Bikini Kill and Le Tigre, to her current fight with Lyme disease and continuing to be creative and positive. Punk has had a number of strong female musicians to look up to, but it's still not enough in any music scene, as meatheads always seem to take over. Hanna has been a role model for the right reasons—not out of ego or money, but because she is smart and talented. You wish that were the case with every musician—it is possible. The doc is a fun ride, but when she's hit with the disease, it's yet another hurdle of bully society to leap over. Few could do it the way Hanna does.

### *The Punk Syndrome (2012)*

Doc about a one-of-a-kind punk band, Pertti Kurikan Nimipäivät from Finland, consisting of developmentally disabled musicians who met in 2009 in a social workshop for adults. The film follows the band as they try to stay together through creative differences and compete in a national battle of the bands made for TV. Uplifting and never cheesy, just totally sincere as they sing about just wanting to be treated with respect—while banging out catchy punk rock. **YOU ARE FAMILIES AND SOMETIMES IT GOES DEEPER THAN BLOOD.**

### *Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer (2013)*

Again, when we see true punk rock in another country, we get a taste of what the music and the message can really do. We're also reminded of how fucked a bad government can be. When the activist band Pussy Riot puts on a political performance inside a church in their homeland Russia, the clamps really come down as they get arrested. The doc follows the creation of the group, their performances, and trial, as the women face seven years in a vicious prison camp—for saying the church is bad. Scary and intense.

### *We Are the Best! (2013)*

An amazing good time as teen girls in 1980s Sweden tell everyone with normal hair and clothes to fuck off, and then start a band because they can't play and no one wants to hear them. What's great is their parents are actually supportive—it's other kids that suck. Hilarious fun and should be required viewing if you have a kid in middle school. Their main song is called "Hate the Sport!"

## LOOK BACK IN ANGER

*Newer documentaries dealing with the past*

### *The Allins (2017)*

To GG Allin's mom, he was just Kevin. This is a look—finally—at the notorious punk icon that gets past the bullshit shock and awe to what really fucked him up. With so many of our "big" names in punk rock—Sid, Darby, Thunders, Dee Dee, et cetera—**YOU FEEL OUR SCENE WAS THE START OF FIGHTING BACK FOR SOMEONE MARGINALIZED AND IS POSITIVE. YET THEY STILL GET SUCKED UP IN THE CHARACTER THEY CREATED AND IT KILLS THEM ALIVE WITH INCREDIBLE SPEED.** GG might have been a talented singer and stage performer,





## THE PUNK SINGER

but he was too far gone from the start, destroyed by an evil father beyond what you could expect. This doc gets to the real story from the mother, who truly wishes things were different, and from older brother Merle. As he embraces the notoriety and fans, Merle finds an unusual existence of living off the fame and the strange knick-knacks he sells to pay the bills. All the while, he has a love for his lost brother that brings the complicated world to the surface.

### ***American Hardcore* (2006)**

Wham, bam—bam, bam, bam! A treasure trove of old footage from big and small names, with some good insights from players talking about the emotion under the intense energy. Although there are some bands and folks oddly missing here—maybe due to infighting—this will satisfy your hardcore fix more than a mix tape. It's more fun to see the people go nuts.

### ***Bad Brains: A Band in D.C.* (2012)**

You could easily say Bad Brains was as influential as any of the biggest names in punk, at least to kids in the audience and definitely to other bands. Present at the very start, ferocious yet more musically adept than others, bringing their diversity to the music—not just the stage—as they played reggae in equal amounts as hardcore. If you don't know the legend behind lead singer H.R., this doc is a start, with incredible archive footage and stories from the rest of the band members about the roller coaster of being a unique band, but never quite crossing over to being a success. The only problem is H.R. doesn't really want his life story told, and the film focuses too much on the reality show aspects of the story, dropping in and grabbing moments, when there's more of a message the band could get across. At least the film doesn't glorify the severe destructive problems within, just observes them. The brief, amazing creativity of the band is the part to celebrate.

### ***Bones Brigade: An Autobiography* (2012)**

While the Dogtown crew started so many important things in the skate world, they were the excess rock'n'roll era to the more DIY punk era of the Bones Brigade crew. While the older guys were

crashing and burning, the new teens on the board were reinventing skating with humility and childlike enthusiasm. The kids were Steve Caballero, Tommy Guerrero, Tony Hawk, Mike McGill, Lance Mountain, and Rodney Mullen. They were led by the older Stacy Peralta, who also directed this look-back doc. The style is a bit forced with the sit down interviews, but all the personality makes it fun and insightful right away. We get to hear about their lives and the rebirth (and rebirth again) of skating direct from their point of view, exploring the idea of skating as both art and sport, and how money affected everything. There's also incredible old footage, and there's even a nice reunion between Peralta and old business partners George Powell, who had the mechanical skill, and artist/writer/photographer Craig Stecyk, who made designs and coined the name Bones Brigade. And even if you know these stories, you've got to see the doc in order to fully realize the next level that is Rodney Mullen.

### ***Dogtown and Z-Boys* (2001)**

The first of two great docs on the start and art of skateboarding by a guy who was there—Stacy Peralta. *Dogtown* covers the first wave, which was more sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll—all seemingly fun until they're *reallllly* not. Stacy has great access to everyone (left alive) and killer old footage. And there's no glossy filter. He shows how so much of the promise and talent went to waste at times. It's exciting and sad and real. The doc established Stacy as a filmmaker, and more than just a guy who films tricks.

### ***End of the Century: The Story of the Ramones* (2004)**

Here's the proof the Ramones were far more complex than the mainstream gave them credit. Maybe it was the clothes, the hair, or all the 1-2-3-4, but the notion that they were just dumb kids who couldn't play never sat well with me in middle school. This doc is fantastic—so much archive footage, but also some perfect, fun, and insightful interviews with everyone involved, including family and friends. Joey was really smart, Johnny was all business, Dee Dee was actually talented, and Tommy and Marky were important to the glue. I knew it. All the warts are here, too—the fighting and



# There can be a lot of humanity inside the angry hardcore, and people can actually like each other while fighting the system.

*The Godfathers of Hardcore*

the bad living. **THE BAND WAS AND STILL IS A BLUEPRINT FOR FUCKUPS TO SUCCEED ON THEIR OWN TERMS.** It's confusing being at a baseball game and people who would beat me up for listening to the band are now screaming, "Hey ho, let's go." But, whatever, Earth is a strange place.

## ***The Filth and the Fury (2000)***

At the very least, **THE TOTAL GENIUS OF THIS DOC IS TO HAVE THE BAND SPEAK IN SILHOUETTE LIKE A WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM.** Plus, how many docs are just people sitting and talking? Some style is always appreciated. The real meat here is getting deep into the story of the Sex Pistols, with all the players giving their memories of what was an important time for music and politics.

Whatever you thought you knew, this film goes deeper. There's a lot of positivity coming from the intense times the band existed in, along with the heartache—from the band's benefit show for firemen on strike, to Lydon breaking down what happened to Sid.

## ***The Godfathers of Hardcore (2017)***

Historical piece about Agnostic Front, with more surprisingly emotional notes than you'd expect. This gives you the usual band history vibe of show footage, old photos, and waxing nostalgic, with some great hardcore footage and stories. There's also an even fresher story here between two very different men working together in life. Vinnie Stigma is the NYC born-and-bred street tough kid who still lives in the same apartment all these years, as coffee takes his neighborhood over. And Roger Miret is the Cuban immigrant, rising out of forced poverty and overcoming some wrong choices that society didn't exactly help him with. There can be a lot of humanity inside the angry hardcore, and people can actually like each other while fighting the system.

## ***Joe Strummer: The Future Is Unwritten (2007)***

British filmmaker Julien Temple was deep in the '70s scene there and thus has made two great looking-back docs on punk pillars who were also his friends. This one goes deep into Strummer's life while keeping it ■ actual movie wrapped around all the reminiscing, with cool home movies and family photos, plus some amazing early Clash footage. Along with Strummer's own voice from interviews and talking to old friends who paint a complete picture, you see the world around Joe that created him and that he also tried to break down.

## ***Skinhead (2016)***

One of the main facets of punk—skinhead—is controversial, especially depending on what decade and city is being referenced. Director Don Letts goes deep into the history and lays out the facts in this great doc he made for the BBC. Letts was there in '70s England as a young British filmmaker and official videographer for the Clash before he made ■ ton of docs on punk history, including one of the better look-backs, *Punk: Attitude* (2005), and ■ doc on the Clash, *Westway to the World* (1999).

*Skinhead* goes through the people, places, and ideals and breaks down the look. Fashion is one the least discussed facets of punk, ■ specific way to show you are an independent mind, or at the very least a member of a local community. Letts finds what appears to be the literal shop where the skin look started along with the original, diverse community at the beginning. He then explores what happens when fashion gets hijacked from a culture.

## ***Sonic Outlaws (1995)***

"Copyright Infringement Is Your Best Entertainment Value." Filmmaker Craig Baldwin is the king of found footage (see *Tribulation 99* later in the list), and made this film to explore the world of using found films—music and sounds—to create new art. He also goes into the world of Negativland, one of the more interesting bands within sample culture, and their well-publicized fight with U2. While that story gets serious, there are also hilarious moments throughout.

## ***Theory of Obscurity: A Film about The Residents (2015)***

Holy shit—are The Residents basically unmasking themselves? For the fortieth anniversary of the trippy band, they allowed a documentary to be made about their long and strange history, playing a warped mix of rock and jazz that's neither of those things, while incorporating high concept theatrical stage shows and always wearing masks, best known for their giant eyeballs in top hats. Hailing from Shreveport, they ended up in ■ cocoon in San Mateo in the late '60s before metamorphosing alongside punk in mid-'70s S.F. They're serious musicians but incredible pranksters and artists—maybe if you mixed the Butthole Surfers with Devo and still took more acid.

No one has ever seen their faces, other than one or two performers whose masks let some face slip. The interviewees are, of course, speaking as close friends of the band who happen to have been next to them all these decades as the band's managers, "The Cryptic Corporation." It seems they are all the band members over the years (that are still alive) and have fantastic stories and ideas about art and music. Mix in some truly special archive footage of their performances, films, and music videos. It's great fun to hear all the theories about who they are before sorta learning they are just who they are: hallucinatory artist-musicians from the deep South, I guess, in my opinion. The real fun is seeing the highlights of their crazy cool work from all the decades.

## ***There Is No Authority but Yourself (2006)***

This is a solid look back at anarcho punks Crass, with great modern day interviews involving Penny Rimbaud, Steve Ignorant, Eve Libertine, and Gee Vaucher, exploring the vibrant political art and history of the band, from simple beginnings to influential songs and shows, to the very odd heights of companies stealing their logos for modern T-shirts and their fans in the KGB. They also speak to the deep ethics of the band, which they still fully embrace. They walk the walk but don't preach—just speak their minds, do what they say, and listen to others.

## **PUNK ETHOS**

*These films may not have ■ mohawk or skateboard, but punks will be fans.*

## ***American Job (1996)***

Not a fiction film and not ■ mockumentary, *Job* follows co-writer and actor Randy Russell through a variety of dead-end jobs. Although Russell is acting for the camera, everyone else in the film is a real worker, with Russell having worked at some of the places in real life.

Based on Randy's zine of the same name from the '80s, *Job* captures the monotony of what the average American is expected to do for work to stay alive. It also takes a step back and looks at the





## D.O.A.: A RITE OF PASSAGE

whole picture, and shows what we punkers already saw—the world of jobs can be absurd. You're ■ cog in ■ enormous wheel. It's not even about tearing down the system from inside. Man, you're working ■■ overnight shift alone in ■ warehouse full of boxes.

There ■■ great characters in here and some truly weird atmospheres. Randy fully represents the 9-to-5 working stiff. We follow him in Milwaukee as he tries to stay gainfully employed making minimum wage, bouncing from job to job. He not only gives some insight on the human condition but also provides mounds of deadpan humor. Somehow, Russell and filmmaker Chris Smith bring ■ unique feel to the documenting of mundane work behavior. When one manager is disappointed in Randy, he makes him switch chairs so Randy can feel like ■ manager for ■ moment, then he has to fire himself. Denizens of overnight shifts create their own perverse logic, and when one co-worker talks Randy into going to a strip club, you just know it's not gonna be pretty.

This is Chris Smith's first film as director, before going on to make the cult classic *American Movie* and many other cool films. Go Milwaukee!

### **Chameleon Street (1989)**

Based on the incredible true story of William Douglas Street, ■ super-con-man who impersonated ■ variety of successful professionals—sometimes to make money, sometimes to prove he can do more than the world expects of him. In ■ short time, Street goes from ■ simple extortion plot to complex impersonations, including ■ reporter from *Time*, ■ lawyer, and even a surgeon—who did multiple fucking surgeries on patients. The intensely enigmatic Wendell B. Harris, ■ self-taught filmmaker from Flint, Mich., wrote, directed, and acted as the main character in this film version of the story, which won Sundance and more recently was released for streaming and DVD. The film tackles identity, class, and race politics that still feel fresh today. The extremely intelligent Street has great ideas to fight the system, but is constantly stumped by tiny details he cannot control. You root for him to win, but feel sorry for the people getting conned ■ well. And it's bittersweet-funny, as the sardonic humor in the film rings all too true.

### **Chuck Norris Vs. Communism (2015)**

In the 1980s, a rich smuggler in Romania decided to deal in VHS tapes of American action films, re-recording them with ■ single female translator dubbing over the film's sound in Romanian. It was not only big time underground entertainment there, it quite possibly helped start their revolution. And this shit is *real*. So amazing. The doc uses incredibly well-made recreations. It's twice as fun as you think it could be.

### **Duck Soup (1933)**

As writers and actors, the Marx Brothers destroyed society in every one of their films. Growing up poor at the turn of the

century, the (real) brothers worked their family into a travelling vaudeville troupe as teenagers. Doing traditional comedy gags and singing, they eventually found their voice making comedy to comment on how dumb the system is. They were a huge success, then pissed off the wrong people and lost everything. They found their way onto Broadway plays and found huge success again, only to get wiped out by the stock market crash of 1929. Hollywood was the last straw. They reluctantly took their plays and acts and remade them into films. Luckily, this is the way they can exist to us, through movies. And they kept their trademark insanity of fighting the system.

However, they never made themselves everymen or superheroes. Instead, they put themselves in the roles of powerful high society and showed the absurdities. For *Duck Soup*, instead of showing the insanity of a government that loves war by portraying serious revolutionaries, they put themselves at the top of the government in a clever satire.

Right off the bat, Groucho Marx becomes president of a country going broke. He blatantly declares war on ■ neighbor for no reason at all—or barely—for the love of a rich woman. Along the way, the four brothers enact total destruction, piling insanity on top of insanity, singing the troops into war fervor through repetition of gibberish—"But everyone else is into it. Aren't you?"

Chico, Harpo, and Zeppo Marx jockey for various cabinet positions in the surreal government. In the simple search for money, they backstab each other and tear the country up. While hilarity ensues in the fake war film, there ■■ far too many similarities to today, or every decade, really. So many times in movies it's a satire that's far more realistic than a drama (also see *Dr Strangelove*, *Monty Python*, et cetera). The writing is sharp and delivered fast. Through total absurdity, the Marx Brothers somehow predicted the greed and militarism over the next seventy years. Might as well laugh while we cry.

Special mention: One of the characters in Penelope Spheeris' *Suburbia* has a sharpie-drawn Groucho face on the back of his white jacket, among T.S.O.L. and other logos.

### **Even Dwarfs Started Small (1970)**

**A GROUP OF DWARVES TAKE OVER THEIR MENTAL INSTITUTION AND CREATE THEIR OWN RULES. THINGS DON'T GO WELL.** Filmmaker Werner Herzog has 1,000 miles of street cred going overboard, with larger-than-life stories and fantastical characters that are often based on fact, then he layers them by working with unusual actors like, say, a group of dwarves. Or with the mysterious Bruno S., who portrayed Kaspar Hauser but also lived a life very similar to Kaspar. Or an entire cast that was hypnotized. Or Klaus Kinski—multiple times. Yet in each film, Herzog finds ■ cohesiveness that is as mesmerizing and poetic ■ it is funny. Like life, right?



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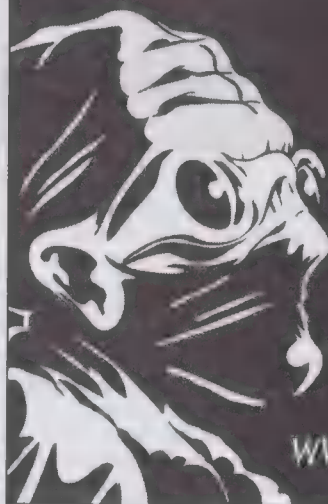


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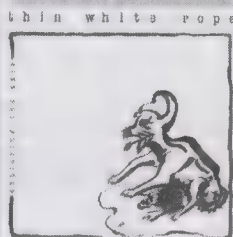


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## MULTIPLE MANIACS

### *Multiple Maniacs* (1970)

Before the great *Hairspray* (1988) or even his cult classic freakout *Pink Flamingos* (1972), counterculture genius John Waters blessed the planet with this insane, hilarious feature that is somehow still incredibly shocking today. Waters has made a career with movies the mainstream thinks are foul and disgusting, when he is simply holding up a mirror to society. Okay, a mirror painted black with vomit on it, but still... And I'm not a fan of the "so bad it's good" nonsense. Bad is just bad. I'm a fan of filmmakers who fully realize they have a vision and limited resources, and will blow it out anyway with the guitar and amp parts left working. That's punk. *Maniacs* has been restored by the Criterion Collection. The high art irony is not lost on Waters—saying he can't believe their logo is in front of this insanity.

### *Ratcatcher* (1999)

It's so hard to catch the true feeling of the perils of childhood. And when a film does, you wonder how the hell did we even survive our youth? Lynne Ramsay's first feature finds the beauty in the beast, as a preteen boy tries to navigate life after a tragedy in a poor neighborhood in '70s Glasgow. He turns to some delinquents, but the film always stays realistic with some incredibly poetic moments about youth.

similar to how the human eye sees it. Then he adapted it to record by infrared heat rather than light, so you could see what was going on in the darkness (metaphor intended).

In 2005, he took that footage and made this seventy-seven-minute diary film, a sort of home movie filmed within his street-photo style. His world at the time consisted of family and close friends in the South, a fascinating mix of everyday folks, talented amateur performers and musicians, and some real life delinquents far past their juvenile status. "Back in the days when everyone liked quaaludes. Let's get doooooown."

They hang out, perform for the camera a bit, and talk about life, with Eggleston narrating a bit in the present day about who they were. Don't show up to this film looking for it to tell you things in words. This is about existing in the same space—a Southern Gothic room—if your eyes were a secret camera. Since making this video, Eggleston has stayed with still photography, always capturing the world in all its beauty and no bullshit. Also check out the great doc following Eggleston around his hometown of Memphis as he takes photos, *William Eggleston in the Real World* (2005), made by Michael Almereyda.

## A group of dwarves take over their mental institution and create their own rules. Things don't go well.

*Even Dwarfs Started Small*

### *Revolución* (2010)

On the hundredth anniversary of the Mexican revolution, ten notable Mexican filmmakers were asked to make a ten-minute short about the revolution. It's more interesting than a gimmick and it's not a historical drama. It's different ideas of what the revolution means to society today. A wide mix of styles and stories—and some are better than others—but the process is worth seeing. I prefer the more abstract moments, which can still get totally nuts.

### *Stranded In Canton* (2005)

Self-taught photographer William Eggleston is born and bred in Memphis, which may have influenced his style creating truly American portraits: gorgeous colors and textures, fascinating characters full of deep undercurrents, without being heavy-handed. With a load of amazing color photos from the late '60s and early '70s, he blew up in the art world with a 1976 show in New York. Three years prior, he got one of the first video cameras sold to the public. He took the zoom lens off and put a prime lens on, which views the world

### *Tokyo Drifter* (1966)

The Japanese filmmaker Seijin Suzuki made a career out of making crazy movies in a methodical-mod style. The studio funding the films had a rule he couldn't change the approved script, which was often a gangster story. Instead, Suzuki went nuts with the visual style, the way the actors delivered the lines, how the camera moved, and the way the film was edited. So his films have cool genre stories and amazing '60s clothes and cars—and a frenetic style that's fast and kinetic, but really smart and funny. His next masterpiece, *Branded to Kill*, came out the following year and is just as ballistic. It got him fired from the studio.

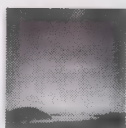
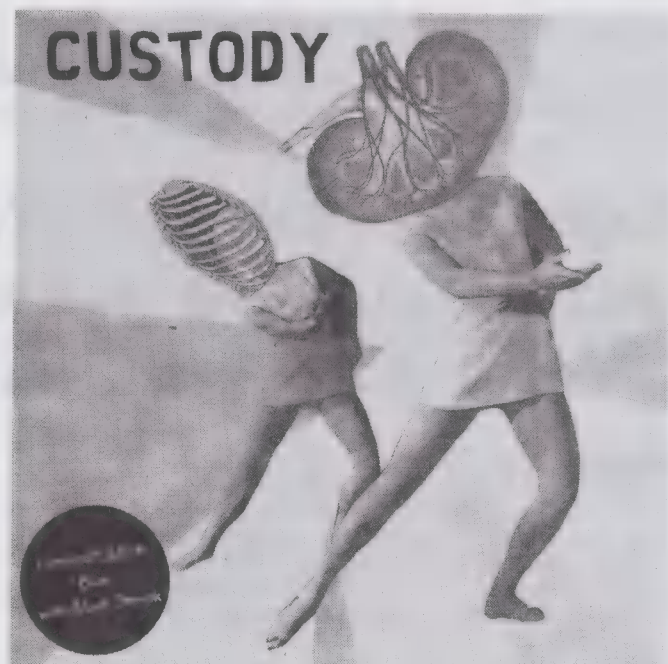
### *Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies under America* (1992)

San Francisco legend Craig Baldwin has a long career of making underground films and it basically starts here. *Trib99* is just under an hour long, yet creates a swirling tornado breaking down the history of earth by connecting every conspiracy theory made (or ninety-nine of them) to a trippy breaking point. Long before internet mash-ups, Baldwin made feature films mixing found footage from old movies,





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## THE CRAMPS LIVE AT NAPA STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL

industrial films, and scenes he made on 16mm. But his footage goes so deep and obscure that it all melts perfectly into a volcano that's pure Baldwin. You'll scratch your head at the possibilities and laugh the whole way.

### ***Vagabond* (1985)**

This film moves backward, starting with the main character's death and showing what happened to get her there. It's not a whodunit crime film, but a look at being "free" without rent or responsibility, just drifting. Being young and wandering is championed so often in art, and we truly dream of it every night. This film manages to capture those details that aren't Instagram moments. *Vagabond's* French title is *Sans Toit ni Loi*, which means "without roof or law." The film captures that philosophy in a realistic way, a noble journey full of beauty and pain. One exchange she has with a shepherd sums up the punkness:

"On the road in this weather?"

She answers, "Didn't choose it."

"But it's your road?"

"Sure."

**They're fucking hilarious. It's the human condition—if we didn't laugh, we'd be crying.**

Also—so French.

It makes me think of the various heroes within the punk scenes. The ones that are rightly on stage; incredibly knowledgeable with strict motivation, but not without humor. Other times we pull in those who don't want to play by rules and are just wandering, passing by at the right time in the right age of youth. And, of course, many of our heroes are both and hard to figure out. It allows for poetic moments and a fierce drive to be alive, to be creative, and to make something out of this stupid fucking world.

### ***The Yes Men Fix the World* (2009)**

Holy shit, I have done nothing productive in life. That's the first thing I thought seeing the Yes Men in action. They've had many videos available for years, and even some other docs made about them, but *Fix* really concentrates their life and ideas. Andy and Mike are the Yes

Men, and they're devoted to doing socially conscious pranks against corporations and politicians that are fucking over humans, animals, society, or the world at large. Not just marching or making signs, but coming up with real high concept, insane stunts. Try to imagine *Jackass* with a tight plan to change the world for good.

The doc opens with the time they went on a BBC live show, said they were spokesmen for Dow Chemical, and they were going to pay for a toxic disaster they caused in Bhopal, India. Incredible. The news channel fucked up by not checking who they were. Dow's stock fell and cost the company millions of dollars and a lot of embarrassment. Then Dow had to report they weren't actually going to help people they hurt. When the Yes Men are confused, thinking the stock actually should have gone up and not crashed when a company declares it has a soul, they investigate what the fuck is going on.

The Yes Men keep going, year after year, with genius stunts like this. Of course, the world isn't really saved in the end, especially in the decade since this came out. But they look at the reasons why. Why does the human race insist on fucking themselves up? Why does money have to lead to such evil? And what can people with good intentions do in order to stay sane?

### ***The Yes Men Fix the World***

At the same time the Yes Men give you the rough details, they're fucking hilarious. It's the human condition—if we didn't laugh, we would be crying. But they show we're not really that crazy for dreaming about getting along, having a good time, and not destroying the planet.

### **KEEP DIGGING. HERE'S A SHOVEL.**

If you want the incredibly deep dive and need to see every instance where a mohawk showed up in film or TV, my friend Zack and his friend Bryan actually did just that, in a book I can't recommend enough: *Destroy All Movies!!! The Complete Guide to Punks on Film* (Fantagraphics). The book also has some great interviews from many players in the punk hall of fame, if it existed.



**Lou Hanman—Guitar, vocals, drums**  
**Jonathan Minto—Bass**

Interview by **Kayla Greet**  
Additional questions by **Todd Taylor**  
Photos by **Nicole C. Kibert Basler**  
Layout by **Eric Baskauskas**



I visited Ireland for the first time ■ few years ago. My friends there took me all along the Northern coast and it was one of the most gorgeous sights—lush greens, waves chopping at cliffs, rainbows stretching across the skyline. In Ballintoy Harbour I came across this opening in the coastline: a serene cave all to myself. As I walked farther in and my eyes adjusted to the darkness, ■ much beauty was revealed in the stillness of this cavern. There had just been a heavy downpour and the streams were sending ripples of sound throughout. I realized I was reaching an unsafe distance from the beach outside so I just stood there and took in the experience.

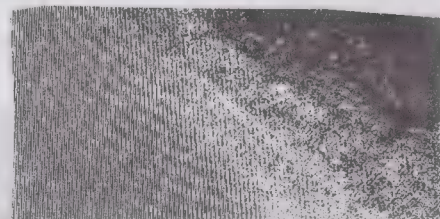
Caves can be scary symbols of isolation and cutting one's self off from the outside world. They can be echo chambers where

you find yourself circling and becoming disoriented. But they can also be incubators of safety until something's strong enough to emerge, or until ■ storm passes. That reverberated noise can be layered upon to create wonderful melodies.

Fittingly, Caves from Bristol, U.K. does all of that in spades. This duo takes metaphorical wounds and hibernates them, creatively nursing them to health until they're ready to strike out on their own. Their songs have an intrinsic tenderness to them, while at the same time flexing their strength in various stages of healing. This pair would sound totally amazing in ■ actual cave, but I'm just as happy hearing them blaring through my speakers.

Having been lucky enough to see them stateside once, I quickly fell in love with their

multi-layer harmonies and the dual male and female vocals. On record and in person, the drums come through strong and powerfully, while distorted, fuzzy bass, and sharp guitar leads perk my ears up. For being only a two piece on record, the sound is incredibly full. They've been compared to Lemuria, Discount, and RVIVR (just ■ happens that Lou is their current tour bassist), as well as gigged with Leatherface, Muncie Girls, Shit Present, and made some Fest appearances. If your interests are anywhere near that ballpark of sounds, Caves is a home run.





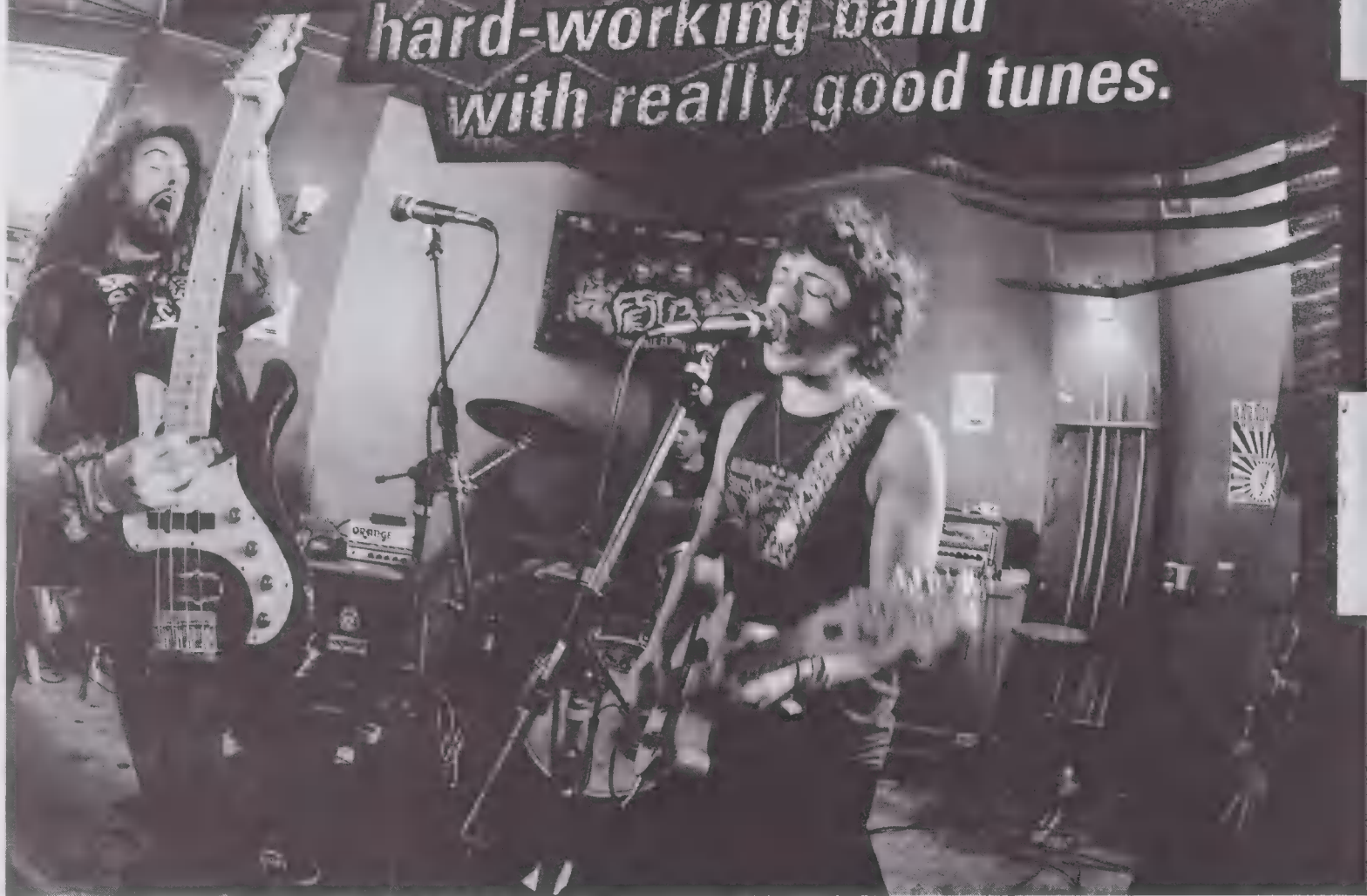






LOU:

*I would like to be a really good,  
hard-working band  
with really good tunes.*





**Kayla:** So if you could please introduce each other and your first impression of each other.  
**Minty:** Louise Hanman, my first impression of ya was you were a little ball of thunder and a shredder.

**Lou:** [laughs] That's cool. That's Jonathan Minto. My first impression of Minty was... I was gonna say when we practiced with you for the first time and you were pretty hungover.

**Minty:** Was that... okay, yeah.

**Lou:** But, rethinkin' that, you were the bloke who everyone wanted at their gigs.

**Minty:** That's funny. I was talking to Dave (Campbell) just the other day and he was saying the same thing. He would let me into gigs for free. I'd just walk in because I'd be enthusiastic and no one else would be. [laughs]

**Lou:** Yeah, you know when you're trying to play and no one is watching? It's like, "Minty will watch!"

**Kayla:** Caves moved fast between playing your first gig and recording. Was that easy, based on experiences from other bands you'd been in?

**Lou:** Well, we've been through several stages. The very, very first stage was me, and Dave, and one of Dave's friends, Mike, playing bass. I had some songs and I just wanted them done real quick, so we started off just being like, "Here it is. Don't overthink it." I didn't know if I wanted to spend that much time and effort on another band. (Lou was also in Flamingo 50 at the time.) That was the beginning stages.

**Kayla:** And, Minty, you started in 2011?

**Minty:** Sounds about right. Yeah, it was like seven or eight years now.

**Kayla:** Straight away, you guys were working with Andrew (Horne) at Specialist Subject. How has your relationship changed or grown in that time? Were there other labels you had considered?

**Minty:** I would say that my relationship with those guys has changed 'cause now I help them paint walls. They just opened a shop above the Exchange in Bristol. So now it's more manual labor. In fact, I think the Caves 7" was maybe the second release on Specialist. After the Magnus Magnusson thing he did himself. So I think it was the first band that was signed.

**Lou:** It felt like it took ages for us to actually have an LP on there. 'Cause there were older U.K. DIY labels that we went with a bit as well, like Bombed Out. It felt like we almost bridged the gap between the scene from ten or fifteen years ago, and then Specialist Subject was like, "Alright, we're doin' this now" and we're like, "Oh great, we'll do it!" But also we got involved with Yo Yo Records based in Berlin, and they do all the Iron Chic and RVIVR stuff in Europe. We always had those two labels really supportive of us. Would you agree, Minty?

**Minty:** Absolutely. Andrew and Katie Stanley do a lot for the scene in the U.K. And Andrew is pushing the record label into the shop. They have an actual store on the go and it's really exciting.

**Lou:** I wish I was there. But I still feel a part of it a lot.

**Minty:** I went to hospital after that opening party. [laughs]

**Kayla:** Besides playing music, what's the best job you've ever had?

**Lou:** My best job, I'm currently doin' it. I can work from home and I can work from the road. It's an admin/customer service type thing for this really small company in New York.

**Kayla:** Gives you a lot of freedom.

**Minty:** Yeah, you can literally do it anywhere. Like, answering the phone in Italy.

**Lou:** And all I've got to do is be nice and polite, and I can do that. [All laugh.]

**Minty:** It's pretty fun listening to you on the phone with your real polite tone, and then when some customer's got on your nerves and you have to be stern with them.

**Lou:** It is funny. We could be having a tour discussion—or whatever you shout about in a tour van—and then my phone will go and I'll be like, [in polite voice] "Alright! Hello!"

**Minty:** I'd say my best job I ever had was my first one. I was a hand model for Action Man action figures. It's the equivalent of G. I. Joe. I was the hands on the back of the package showing you how to shoot a cross bow.

**Kayla:** Wow! That's awesome! Your photography is fantastic, too. Is that what you're currently doing—graphic design and photography?

**Minty:** More graphic design. People don't really pay for pictures, but they'll pay for pictures to be put on something. I try not to treat photography like a job 'cause it takes all the fun out of it.

**Kayla:** Oh, exactly right.

**Minty:** It's too stressful. I've actually just started to take pictures again 'cause I've become un-burnt out.

**Lou:** Un-burnt out?

**Kayla:** I like that.

**Lou:** Like a phoenix from the flames?

**Minty:** Exactly, yeah!

**Kayla:** How did you feel the first time you saw your photos on the cover of a record in a shop? I know you've done stuff for Flatliners, Against Me!, and Muncie Girls.

**Minty:** I was blown away 'cause they wanted to do it. Jokes on them now! But no, it's always really amazing to see it in person. To have something physical. Most of my photographs are on the internet and only digital stuff. I've never done an art show or anything, so it's really nice to see it on a magazine or record. Tangible products.

**Kayla:** What were your parents like growing up? Creative types? Conservatives? Lou, I know your father used to build you guitars and seems very supportive.

**Lou:** My parents are so supportive. They got me flute lessons and my dad taught me how to play open chords on guitar. He took me to a rock guitar workshop which is basically where I learned to play punk, I suppose. My dad bought me my first drum kit. He can't really play that much. He's into blues. So they were really supportive of me in that way. I sort of hung on to that when I

was struggling to come out to them. They're pretty conservative people and they're very, very supportive.

**Kayla:** That's the other thing I wanted to ask too—what's the hardest thing you've had to explain or share with them?

**Lou:** So they've been very supportive of my musical pursuits, which is great. I struggled to come out to them as a teenager though, and they found it very hard to accept. I learned how hard it was for them much later in life. I guess they kept that hidden from me.

**Minty:** I think I'm in the same boat. It's been me and my mum for a long time and she's been unbelievably supportive. Maybe too supportive, like she might need to cut the leash. Never-ending support, and I wouldn't have been able to do it without that.

**Lou:** I love Minty's mum. She's so nice.

**Kayla:** The day Brexit was voted on I was at a Murderburgers show in Seattle. I talked to Fraser about it that night and he was just distraught. Now a year and a half later, how has this impacted you and what kind of experiences have you had connected with that?

**Lou:** I was in Pittsburgh playing a show with Mikey Erg. I watched it come in live and it happened and I couldn't believe it. I was shocked. It's just been a total debacle. I'm not in it 'cause I'm in the States, but it seemed like a generational thing. Anyways, carry on Minty. I'm sure you have plenty to say.

**Minty:** Well, we're over here just shruggin' it, you know? Like, "Now what?" No one really knows what's supposed to happen, but we know that it's a bad thing. I think they just released a forecast of it and it's gonna be bad for everyone.

**Lou:** It seems like everyone—'cause I spoke to my parents about it—and it was decided on sort of a whim or a feeling-type vote. Instead of, "What does this mean for the economy?" And I thought that was absolutely ridiculous. Lies about NHS (National Health Service) spending and things like that. In fact, I remember my mum saying to me, "How did they expect us to make the right decision if they won't tell us what will happen?"

**Minty:** They literally printed a huge lie on the side of a bus and paraded it around about how much it was going to cost the NHS and it just wasn't true at all.

**Kayla:** Oh, wow.

**Minty:** It's bonkers.

**Kayla:** The impression we get in the States is that it allows people who were already racist to spout their xenophobia and hate without hiding it. And that people aren't holding back or having any qualms about saying things that are terrible and wrong anymore.

**Lou:** Yeah, it's given people permission to be openly racist. A friend of mine messaged me the next day, after the result. She was on the tube in London and she was like, "People just openly crying on the tube." And I was walkin' about in Bristol a few months afterwards, and there were these workmen-type, big fellas in a car on a small residential road. And there was this delivery van just sort of blocking the road 'cause a lot of



Bristol roads are tiny and are not two way. So these worker dudes were like, havin' ■ go at this delivery driver 'cause he didn't look or sound English and he was blocking the road for a second. It was heartbreaking to see that and to think like, "Well I guess that sort of thing is all right now?"

**Minty:** Yeah, I think there was lots of like, "You guys should go home!" after that, as if someone was making people go home to native lands.

**Kayla:** Right and most of the time, those people are *from* Britain. It's awful. It's happening here, too.

**Lou:** It is weird how it's so in sync.

**Kayla:** Mhmm. Trump and Brexit.

**Lou:** Yeah, I didn't want to say the "T" word.

**Kayla:** Yeah... Sorry. Neither do I.

**Lou:** But yeah, it's so strange how it's on par with each other.

**Kayla:** Hopefully we're due for a complete 180 and it all washes away soon. Maybe we'll go to being more liberally minded and accepting.

**Lou:** I certainly feel like it's more two steps forward, one step back sort of thing.

**Kayla:** When you're touring Europe, do you need to speak multiple languages?

**Minty:** It's important to know the pleasantries and how to be nice to people. Knowing their native tongue is crucial, I think. 'Cause otherwise you just seem like a bit of a dick. I really don't know enough French, German, Italian. I had the Duolingo app on my phone at one point and I was trying to learn it, but once I picked it up again, the tour had finished.

**Lou:** I find that as long ■ you sort of try to say "Hello" and "Thank you" and "Please"—you know, the basic pleasantries—that's the right thing to do.

**Minty:** And "Where's swimming pools?" That's important. [All laugh.]

**Kayla:** Have you learned that in many languages?

**Lou:** Yeah. [Speaks in German.] Oh well, that's "Where is the station?" but I'm getting there. [laughs]

**Kayla:** When I visited Europe, I learned that pinball is called Le Flipper in most places. So when I was looking for pinball in Berlin and Rome it was much easier.

**Lou:** That's ■ good thing to learn!

**Kayla:** In your day-to-day life, how are you fighting for social change, intersectionality, and inclusivity? Are there organizations you support or work directly with?

**Lou:** That's a very good question.

**Kayla:** Or is that something you address lyrically?

**Lou:** Personally, I don't tend to write outwardly political or lyrics about social commentaries or anything that is outside of my own personal experience. My lyric writing is normally from ■ place of personal frustration or something that I need to work through. And, I, as an English person from the South West, have ■ deep feeling of not wanting to overstep any boundaries or not wanting to talk about something I don't know anything

about. Not wanting to put my foot in my mouth or something.

**Kayla:** Sure.

**Lou:** So I live in West Philly at the moment which is such an awesome, multicultural place. So it feels sort of great to be in ■ place where I'm out of my West country English comfort zone and I try to be ■ person in the community and walking around with big respect and with my eyes open.

**Kayla:** That's great.

**Lou:** Maybe we/I don't do enough about fighting for social change. I used to think it was enough to be ■ band that wasn't all cis dudes. But in this current climate, I don't think that's enough.

**Minty:** Comparing Philly to New York is like Bristol to London. Same distance as well. So you're living in the Bristol of the States.

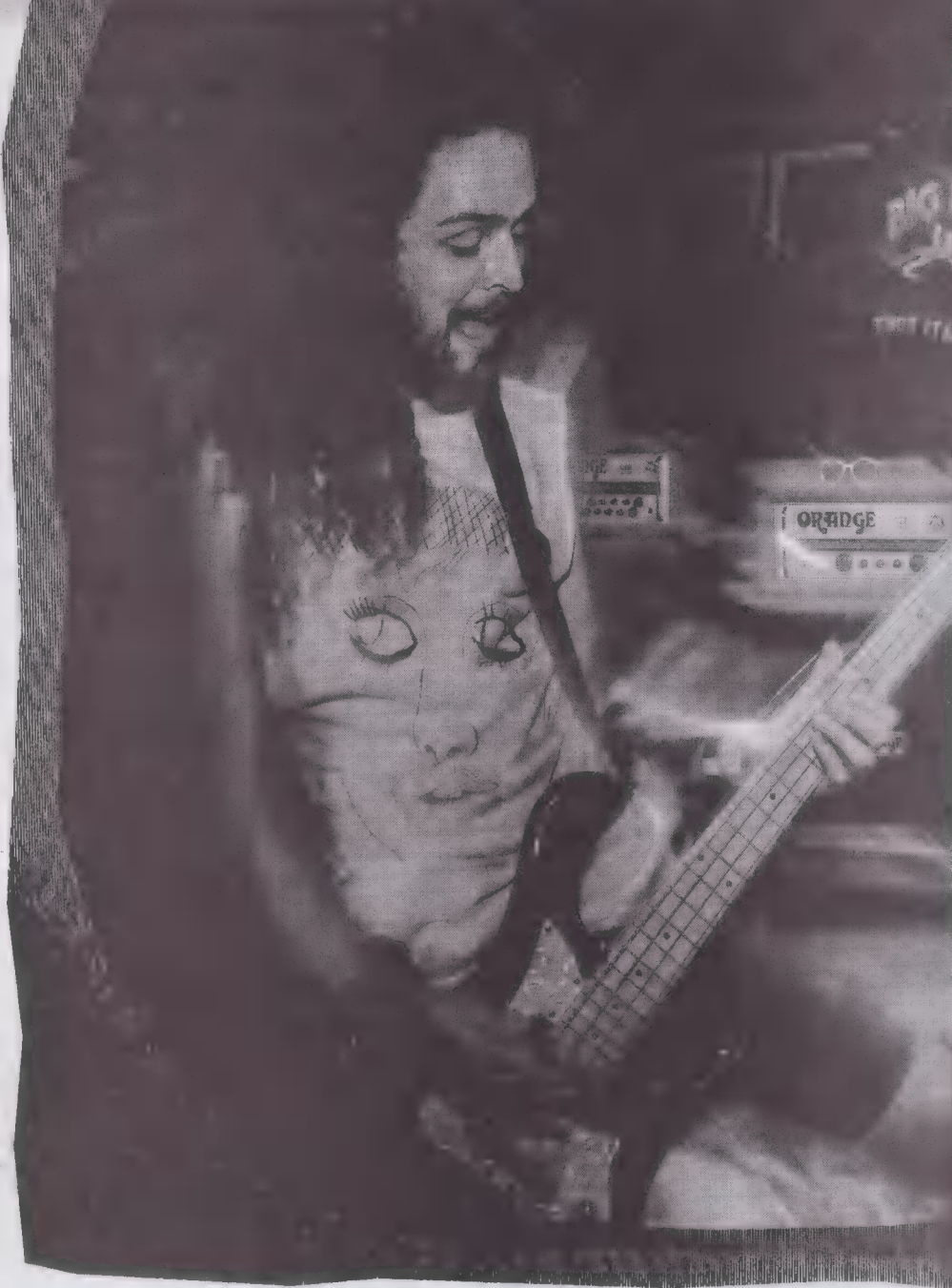
**Lou:** [laughs] Yeah, I ■■■ see that. It does feel like a lot of similarities in terms of different communities in Bristol. You know, there are the pockets of community in Bristol and that feel familiar in some ways to Philly.

**Minty:** There's ■ tinge of it. There's a tinge of the Briz in the Phiz.

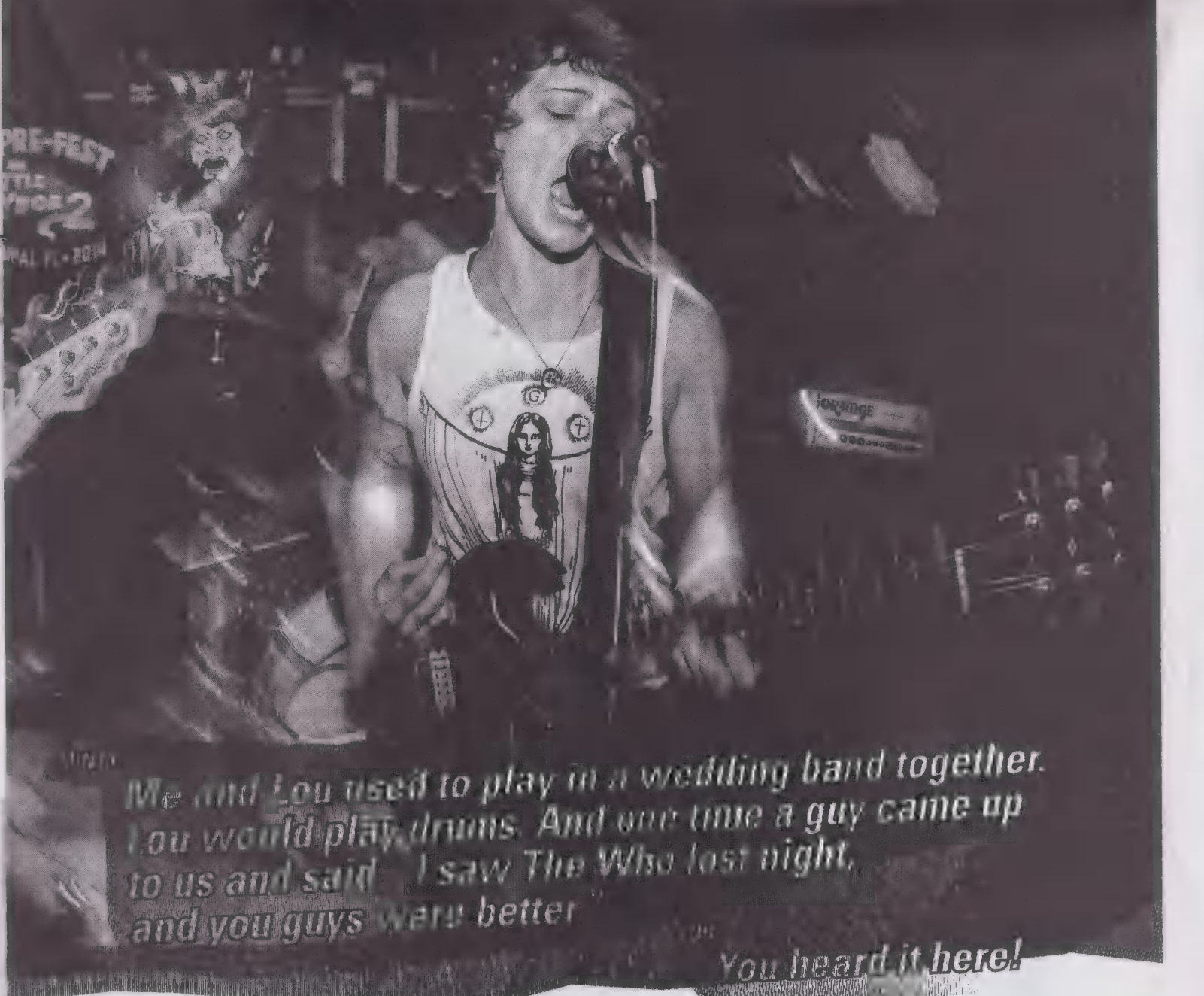
**Lou:** I struggle to find similarities between the U.S. and the U.K. now. It just feels so different to me. Everything I learned in the U.K. is completely different. It's almost non-relatable, especially in terms of people and communities. People's experiences are so different.

**Kayla:** It sounds like a case of long term culture shock. Is it like learning ■ completely new lifestyle and trying to assimilate?

**Lou:** I think, in general, I've been trying to get used to certain types of people or







Me and Lou used to play in a wedding band together. Lou would play drums. And one time a guy came up to us and said "I saw The Who last night, and you guys were better."

You heard it here!

viewpoints that I've not come across before. And I've been trying to understand the reasons why people act or think the way they do, like the fervor behind guns, religion, or lack of an equal health care system. The mixing of church and state, too. Also, for example, the right wing anti-government folks—I'm used to this idea from a European anti-fascist or anarcho setting, not armed militias in Oregon. There is a general and all-pervasive atmosphere of having to fight for yourself and your needs a lot more. It is a very aggressive atmosphere to step into that I'm constantly trying to navigate or understand. I mean—what do I know really?—you've just gotta get on with it.

**Minty:** And you drive on the other side of the road well. It's weird.

**Kayla:** I appreciate that you say the "other"

side instead of the "wrong" side or "right" side. [All laugh.]

**Minty:** There is no wrong or right side. I have a feeling that we're in the wrong, actually. 'Cause it's just us and Australia.

**Kayla:** Well, we have metric guilt in the States. [laughs] How do you cope with disappointment, mistakes, or stress? And, on the flipside, how do you manage happiness and contentment?

**Minty:** I deal with mistakes and all that by thinkin' about them a lot. And a lot and a lot. And some things I still think about happened years ago. I remember one time I introduced my friend Rory as Ryan to someone, and he said "Did you just call me Ryan?" and I think about that still. I think about mistakes all the time. There have been a lot of them. [laughs]

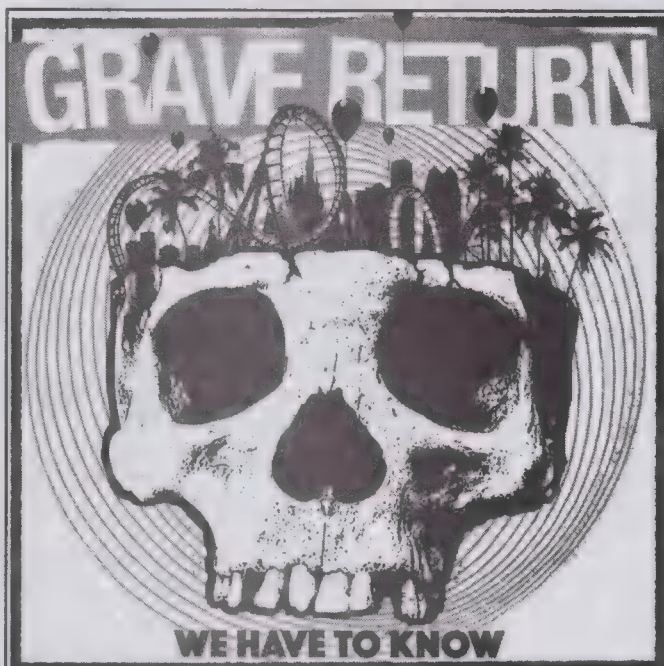
**Lou:** I think with both extremes I try and be as honest as I can. It's hard sometimes when you feel like you've made a mistake or you have deep disappointment about something. It's sort of harder to come to terms with. And I'm trying to grow as a person and to not keep that buried, if you know what I mean. Better to talk about things than not.

**Minty:** Yeah, absolutely. I found that out recently. I would always keep things in but it's better to air them out straight away. Don't let them linger.

**Kayla:** Right. I've been doing a lot of that lately, too. It's hard at first but once you've started, it's hard to stop.

**Lou:** It's hard, though, if you feel like you haven't got a network of people around you who you can trust to tell your shit to.





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**Kayla:** Or call you out on your bullshit too, 'cause that's equally important.

**Lou:** Yeah, absolutely. You need to be able to take that calling out. It's easy to get defensive.

**Kayla:** What are some of the most surprising things people have said to you at gigs? More than just the "great job," "liked your set."

**Lou:** It's happened a couple of times. I won't say where or who or whatever, but it's when somebody comes up to you and says that a song or something that you put out into the world helped save their life. Like they were feeling suicidal or something like that. It's flooring to me.

**Minty:** Having been in a similar situation, being so brave to walk up to the person who saved their life and thank them for it... is very touching.

**Kayla:** That's powerful.

**Lou:** It's a big deal, you know?

**Minty:** And it helped me in ways as well. The help was reflected back toward me. I felt a lot better about what I was doing.

**Lou:** Yeah, yeah.

**Minty:** [laughs] I was gonna say, me and Lou used to play in a wedding band together.

**Kayla:** Oh no way!

**Minty:** Lou would play drums. And one time a guy came up to us and said, "I saw The Who last night, and you guys were better." [All laugh.]

**Lou:** You heard it here!

**Kayla:** Were you guys playing cover songs in the wedding band?

**Minty:** Oh yeah, loads of them. What was it, like two hours worth of music?

**Kayla:** Holy shit. That's a ton!

**Lou:** Yeah, it was around there. What Minty got off lightly from was... there was the few other incarnations of the band before Minty was sucked into it. So I've learned—I don't know, I'm gonna say at least 150 other songs.

**Minty:** Other songs?

**Lou:** 'Cause I've been doin' it for a couple of years now. And then we got into a groove.

**Kayla:** You fine tuned the set.

**Lou:** It was so good to always learn a new song. I think that really steps up my game as far as being a musician. The couple would ask for a first dance and we'd get the information a week or two before the wedding. The first time we would play it would be their first dance. And I loved that. On. Your. Toes! Here we go!

**Minty:** One time the first dance was "The Power of Love" by Huey Lewis And The News, which is my favorite song. I was so excited—the fact that we'd been asked to play that for the first dance. I don't know why, but we ended up not playing it. Maybe Andy hadn't learned it? 'Cause you had it down pat, right?

**Lou:** I had it down. Yeah, we ended up playing that on the PA.

**Minty:** Oh yeah and I played along on bass! That was a good first dance.

**Kayla:** When you come back from a tour, what's the thing you're most looking forward to seeing or doing? What gives you comfort and what makes you feel like you're home again?

**Minty:** My bathtub.

**Lou:** Bath! Havin' a bath is pure joy. Havin' time to yourself is good. I'm gonna go a bit bleak now, but it doesn't feel like comin' back to Philly is like coming back to my home. I finish a tour, I'm back here, then I'm like, "Eh, alright."

**Minty:** Tour continues. Tour of life.

**Lou:** I like tour and music being my life, not, "Okay, I'm having a break from life and I'm doing music."

**Kayla:** I also wanted to ask what your preferred pronouns are, and how often you are mistaken as a Louis instead of Louise?

**Lou:** I use female pronouns. Thanks for asking, that's cool. I am constantly mistaken for an Italian Lou 'cause of my job. I don't see customers face to face, I talk to them on the phone or predominantly I email and I don't sign off as Louise. I sign off as Lou just 'cause, that's my name. I didn't realize that it would be a thing, like if they phone up and say, "Oh I spoke to this guy Lou on the email," I'm like, "Okay, yeah, yeah, that's me and I can help you." I've noticed this 'cause I used to do admin in the U.K. I would sign off Louise in my email signature, and if customers think you're a guy, they will do what you say. Take you more seriously. If I'm arranging something in my new job here, they will just do it. It's easier to get things done 'cause they think I'm a guy. And that's helpful to me.

**Kayla:** It's terrible, but it's true. I've seen it happen.

**Lou:** Conversely, on the flipside, if I'm talkin' to them on the phone—if they're sort of angry about something and they want to speak to Lou—they speak to me like, "Oh, sorry." If they speak to me on the phone, I can appease them easier. Crazy.

**Minty:** Yeah, male pronouns. I don't really feel like a "guy." I feel like a "chap," really. It's funny. I buy a lot of musical gear on Gumtree, which is like a Craigslist, and I have multiple accounts on it under different aliases. I had one under a female name, and the replies I got from this one person in particular were terrifying. Very creepy. If I was just using my normal name, he'd have been like, "Oh, whatever. Are you going to buy this amp?" But he kept on sending me messages over and over. The reason I have all these accounts is just so I can get a better deal. But that was really eye opening and scary and I reported him. I didn't know what to do. I was really shook up by it. But that really opened my eyes to how people talk to you when they think you're someone else.

**Kayla:** Yeah, it's unfortunate. All we can do is treat each other equally and call people out when they're doing it to others.

**Minty:** Yeah, just be nice to each other. There's no reason to bring in how lonely the person thought I was. Ending the messages with kisses.

**Kayla:** That's awful! Well... my next question is about your hair. Do you ever get it stuck places you wish you hadn't?

**Minty:** Oh god, it's always stuck in something. It's stuck in something right now.

*I'd say my best job I ever had was my first one. I was a hand model for Action Man action figures. I was the hands on the back of the package showing you how to shoot a cross-bow.*





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I just had ■ bath so it's like, everywhere. There's times when we're playing and my hair flies around a bit and it'll get stuck on the tuning peg on the head stock. And I'll bang my head the other way and tear out ■ chunk. Yeah, it sucks. I was tying up my hair in my bedroom the other day and it touched the light bulb and it kinda set on fire ■ bit. [All laugh.]

**Kayla:** What do you guys do to stay fit and healthy on tour? Swimming whenever possible? No matter the season?

**Lou:** I've started trying to go running on tour but it doesn't last long 'cause you're so knackered. Sort of tired and you just want to sleep in ■ bit more so you're not so exhausted. But, yeah, we go swimming. If it's too cold to go, when we're not somewhere by the sea, then we'll go find the nearest indoor swimming pool and have ■ quick half hour. I don't know if it's ■ fitness thing rather than ■ soul cleansing thing. Just to have ■ dunk.

**Minty:** There's ■ phase of actually swimmin' laps, which is pretty cool. I ■ into more of the slides and the jumpin' in for the most part.

**Lou:** I like to do a bit of both.

**Minty:** Lou's like pro at swimming. She was on the swim team.

**Kayla:** Really?

**Lou:** Yeah, as ■ child I was on the Cheltenham women's swim team. I was good. I love swimming so much. And that's stayed with me, for sure.

**Minty:** I remember one time when we had just gotten off the Channel Tunnel and we were swimming in the sea in the pissing down rain. It was horrible but we went in the sea just 'cause. And we saw this huge bit of graffiti on the side of the beach on this big seawall that says "SEA IS LIFE." And that became ■ reason to live, 'cause Sea Is Life.

**Lou:** I think that was one of our best, shit-est swims. That kind of like, "We're doin' this, come rain or shine." Was it Calais?

**Minty:** It was Calais. But it was so miserable. You couldn't be any wetter. From above, from below.

**Kayla:** What are words you say that most Americans mishear or don't understand?

**Lou:** I've started changing my vocabulary ■ little bit. Like I don't say "queue," I say "line." Or I say "four-thirty" instead of "half four." It's weird. I think until someone knows me, they can't seem to understand me at all. So I'll say something like [monotone] "Can I have a cup of coffee, please?" It has been anything I say is completely not understandable. But, you know, that's fine.

**Minty:** There's that one time we were on tour in the Americas. We went to ■ Taco Bell and we tried to order some seven-layer burritos. And I said "Can we have three seven-layer burritos, please?" really slowly and quite well pronounced. They just stared back at me. I ended up having to point and then after Lou ordered they said they really liked our accents. [laughter]

**Lou:** I think, though, if you're not expecting to hear ■ accent then it can be sort of... you need to get into the context of the accent.

**Kayla:** It's only ever happened to me one time in my life. I was in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales in ■ shop and the girl at the counter flipped out and said, "Oh my gosh, I love your accent!" It's such a weird feeling, 'cause this is just how I talk.

**Lou:** I think that might be why I like New York. 'Cause they're used to having people from everywhere in the world and they don't give a shit.

**Kayla:** Right. "Oh you're English? Who cares?"

**Lou:** I love that.

**Kayla:** Okay, last question. How would you like Caves to be regarded?

**Lou:** That's ■ good question. Hang on, let ■ think. I guess, actually, whenever you record ■ record you're always thinkin' about how it's gonna grow in its life. "What's this gonna sound like in ten years?"—if something is gonna sound dated. I would like to not sound dated. Maybe not just that. I would like to be a really good, hard-working band with really good tunes.

**Minty:** One that can play any sort of situation. Like when we arrived to the venue late and were stuck in traffic for hours in Toulouse, France. There was a noise complaint when the opening band played and we just played really quietly. So, maybe, ■ band that can adapt to any sort of situation.

**Lou:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Minty:** No matter what happens, just play it, just do it. Just make it through a set.

**Kayla:** Think on your feet.

**Lou:** I agree. And also sort of be like ■ really good band in whatever setting it is. On the one side I always liked when I saw Europe's best DIY bands touring in the U.K. and they would be tour tight. They would just turn up to a back room of a pub—upstairs from a pub is where ■ lot of DIY U.K. shows are. They would play this set on ■ shitty PA and it would just be so good, 'cause they would just be rockin'. So it doesn't matter where they are, they'd just play a really good set. I always wanted to be that kind of a band. And then on the flipside, you can't just turn your amps up and stuff. I want to be a musician and band that has really great songs and doesn't just rely on being really loud.

**Minty:** And be adaptable. It's hard.

**Kayla:** But it's ■ fun challenge.

**Minty:** That's right.

**Yeah,  
just be nice  
to each other.**





# KITTEN



MARK NIEBUHR



# FOREVER

IS: CORRIE, LAURA & LIZ

INTERVIEW JOHN ENSLEY  
PHOTOGRAPHS DARIN KAMNETZ, CAITLIN CONNERY AND MARK NIEBUHR  
LAYOUT DYLAN DAVIS

Kitten Forever has been playing their riot grrrl-inspired punk rock since 2006. Switching instruments and lead vocal duties adds to their exuberant live show, while highlighting their musical compatibility and mutual admiration. The Twin Cities trio deliver pop hooks screamed through a distorted telephone microphone, accentuated by stomp beats and bouncy riffs. Crunchy bass lines and frenetic drumming create a chaotic harmony of simple yet dynamic explosions that make you want to dance, yell, slam, and laugh. From basement shows to national tours and festivals, the band is focused on having fun while creating an inclusive atmosphere where rock, art, and feminism can merge.

I met up with Kitten Forever in their south Minneapolis headquarters where they graciously provided insight into their friendship and band. During our chat, we discussed politics, pop music, and dumpster diving for musical equipment.



**John:** With ■ band ■■■ Kitten Forever, are you cat lovers or cat owners?

**Laura:** Liz and I both have cats. Corrie just has cats that live at her house.

**Corrie:** Fun fact is I do not like cats. I ■■ definitely a dog person, but I've always lived with cats my whole life, in some regard, from living in punk houses. It's inescapable, so I'll live with them comfortably as ■ fifth and sixth roommate. Technically, Kitten Forever was named after Liz's cat one hundred years ago.

**Liz:** One hundred and thirteen years ago. Well he's thirteen. Kitten Forever is now thirteen.

**John:** What's the cat's name?

**Liz:** His name's Scout. He's very baby-faced, thus Kitten Forever. But he's huge.

**Corrie:** It's true. He looks like a bowling ball.

**John:** So how'd the band come together?

**Corrie:** Laura and I went to high school together, kind of. We were a couple of years apart, but we've known each other since then. We were both playing in some separate bands that occasionally crossed over into being in the same band. We were both in Daisy's Compact Mice for a little bit together. Then we met Liz through going to shows in Minneapolis when we were babies. We knew her peripherally, but we were really intimidated by her. We thought she was really cool and we wanted to be friends with her, but didn't really know how. She had come to see Daisy's Compact Mice play a few times, so we were all aware of each other. Then we were at a show at ■■ old punk house called the Kremlin, and Liz was standing in front of us....

**Liz:** I was definitely standing behind you, because you both turned around and you were like... [Points at bandmates. Everyone laughs.]

**Corrie:** Okay, okay, Laura and I had been talking about how we should ask Liz to start a band with us so we could be friends. So, we turned around and said, "Do you want to start ■ band with us?" She said yes. We just wanted to become friends so we started ■ band to bridge the awkward gap.

**John:** Liz, were you in a band at the time?

**Liz:** Nope, I had never been in ■ band before. I've only been in maybe less than five bands since then. This is my first band.

**Corrie:** But we knew Liz from doing Twin Cities Zine Fest. She had ■ zine that we liked and was friends with people we knew doing visual art.

**John:** When you started the band, what ■■■ the decision to make it bass and drums?

**Liz:** Laura had already been playing guitar in her old band Baby Guts at the time and she wanted to play bass, and then Corrie was learning how to play drums.

**Corrie:** I wanted to learn how to play drums and didn't know how.

**Liz:** And I wanted to sing in ■ band and never had before.

**Corrie:** And we didn't want to have ■ fourth person. [All laughing.] We had a thing where we wanted to start ■ heavy, sludgy band, which is not how it turned out. But we kind

of had the idea to be a bass-heavy band. We made each other mix CDs that were "Kitten Forever" inspiration when we first started, things that we were listening to that we were going to think about. None of that heavy sludgy stuff was on there. It was Bratmobile and Hilary Duff. [All laughing.]

**John:** With the bass-driven sound, it gives it ■ very gritty but bouncy kind of feel. What effect do you ■■ on the bass?

**Laura:** We ■■ guitar pedal.

**Corrie:** We've had it for so long.

**Laura:** When we first started playing, everything ■■ used ■■ trash equipment. Everything we used was part of this communal pile of junk we had in the basement—from Corrie and me and our friends, and roommates at the time—being in other weird bands. We sort of just scavenged what we could, and one of those things was the guitar pedal. We wanted the bass to have ■ super gritty sound and to be meaty. We were like, "This will work," and just plugged it in, and have been using the exact same model ever since then.

**Liz:** Literally we replaced it once.

**Corrie:** My first drum set, I had pulled out of the dumpster at The Garage, which is a teen center in Burnsville, like ■ teen venue that Laura and I went to all the time in high school, which is how we got started playing in bands.

**Corrie:** I pulled that drum set out of ■ dumpster that someone had thrown away and I spray painted it hot pink. It was literal garbage, and that was our first drum set forever. We didn't buy another drum set until 2013.

**John:** Where did the phone mic come in?

**Liz:** When we started rotating [who plays what instrument], because we didn't always do that. Before we decided to rotate we were trying to think of ways to change how we sounded, or make it more interesting. At that point, we had been ■ band for probably six or seven years. We hadn't written *Pressure* yet. (The first album that features the band switching instrument duties.) We had already written two albums, ■■ we were trying to find ways to mix it up. The telephone mic was something we had talked about adding to make that more exciting, and then we had the idea to start switching. We implemented both at the same time.

**Corrie:** We ended up buying ■ telephone microphone for about twenty-five bucks off eBay after we tried all that expensive weird shit, and it sounded the best.

**John:** The decision to switch instruments, was that to get more creative juices flowing, or for songwriting, or a little of both?

**Liz:** I think both. I played bass in other bands and really liked it and wanted to keep doing that but didn't want to be in any other bands.

**Corrie:** I kept trying to start a band that I fronted, and it wasn't really happening. There was definitely ■ thing where we were trying to start other bands to fulfill different things also. At least for me, every time I tried to work with other people, it ■■ so frustrating. Kitten Forever all work really well together,

so it was kind of like, "Why can't it just be like this when I start another band? Can't we just write songs organically, and we have fun, and we like each other?"

**Liz:** Right, I can just say [sings], "Ne-ne-ne-ne" and you know what I mean.

**Laura:** Yeah, totally.

**Corrie:** We hadn't really realized—or we had taken for granted—how effortless it was for us to write and work together. Then it was like, we keep trying to do all these other things outside the band. Can we just do them in the band? Who says that we can't suddenly re-tool the whole arrangement?

**John:** The writing process—is it more collaborative or do you each bring ■ song to practice?

**Laura:** It's really collaborative, and when we started switching, nothing changed in our writing process. We still pretty much did the exact same. Someone comes up with a riff ■■ the bass and we just write the song from there. The majority of the time it's written right in the basement, not at home and brought to practice.

**Corrie:** I think we've trashed three riffs in the eleven years we've been a band. If someone shows up with something, it's just like....

**Laura:** That's just the song.

**Corrie:** We'll just make that happen regardless of what it sounds like initially. It always turns into something in the end. On the more recent songs we've been writing, someone will come sometimes and be like, "Oh I worked on a riff." But no one ever comes to practice and says, "I wrote a song." Someone will have a riff that's six notes that ■■ vaguely in a weird strumming pattern.

**Liz:** Yeah, I feel like I always bring notes and just play it in four/four. Then we make it like a cool thing, but that's what it's going to sound like.

**Laura:** We all individually write our own lyrics, so if one of ■■ is on bass and the other is on drums and the third person is writing lyrics, the lyric person will participate in the actual structuring of the song and getting the vibe, and then later will bring lyrics into it. Maybe once or twice have we hammered out lyrics with each other, but that's mostly ■ thing we all do separately.

**Corrie:** But even ■ lot of times, if I'm writing lyrics and they're writing the song, they'll finish the song at practice and I'll usually have lyrics already written or just laying around. Half the time I'm mashing them into whatever they've written on the spot. By next practice it's ■ song and it's done. Most songs don't take more than a grand total of five hours to finish.

**Laura:** Yeah, like two practices.

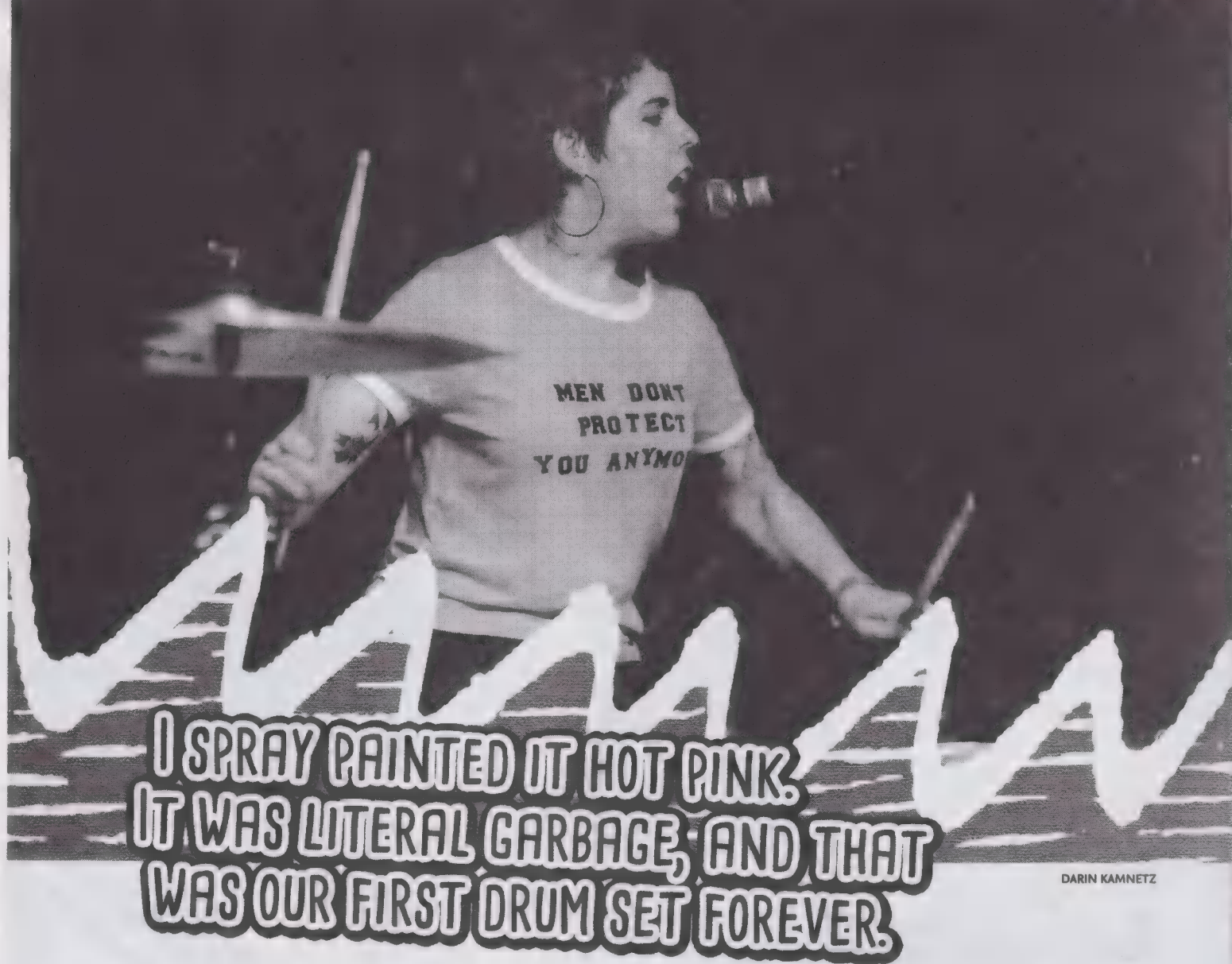
**Corrie:** It's weird because I feel we're flippant about our songwriting, because it's like, "Oh, who gives ■ shit? It's just some garbage and it's ■ song." We downplay it ■ lot, but I think the downplaying comes from it being very simple. But it's very simple because we've worked together for so long and we work very well together. It doesn't have to be a big production because we can communicate very effortlessly and very



WE JUST WANTED TO BECOME FRIENDS SO WE  
STARTED A BAND TO BRIDGE THE AWKWARD GAP.







DARIN KAMNETZ

intuitively about a thing we want to have happen. If something's not working we can just kind of be like, "I just feel like it needs to be like uhhhh."

**Laura:** And we're like, "Yeah, yeah, I totally understand." [laughs]

**Corrie:** And then [sings], "da dun, da dun, da dun." And then it's just done, you know?

**Liz:** That's not even an abridged version either. [laughing]

**Corrie:** It's very satisfying to be in that kind of writing relationship and environment. Also, similarly, we don't trash anything, so there's not a huge amount of pressure to write an amazing riff, because whatever anybody brings to the table is cherished by everyone who's there and turned into something. Nobody ever brings something and someone's like, "I don't like that." That's just never happened. There's definitely been times where things have come to the table and I've been like, "Man, I don't know what this is, but it's gonna be something." Every one of those songs ends up being a song that I love later.

**John:** I know as an audience member, when I see your band perform, I feel like I'm at a party because you're having so much fun. There's this really cool connection, not only with each other, but with the audience. Fairly recently you've played some pretty big shows, and you do a lot of smaller clubs and DIY spaces. Is there a difference in how you interact or connect with an audience at some of the larger shows? Do you find it's an adjustment?

**Corrie:** No, not really. That's why it's sick.

**Laura:** I feel like we play the same show whether we're on First Ave Mainroom headlining, or in a basement with our friends. It's the exact same show.

**Corrie:** If anything, we play better in a basement. There was this weird thing when we were on tour with Babes In Toyland where there was a day we played with Babes at a big venue, then we drove to Chicago and played the basement of the Double Door to thirty people. It doesn't really feel any different. We played the last Triple Rock show and then we went and played the Eagle's Club a

few nights later. We go out of our way to treat any show like we're playing in a basement. Hopefully that vibe projects.

We definitely have a funny thing that we do. When we were at Riot Fest this year, before we went on, scoping out the stage: "How close can we get together so that when we switch around we're still able to get to each other?" The hardest part about being on a big stage is the distance that separates us. Not only is that difficult for the logistics of our set, but also the feeling of it is uncomfortable. Can we just take this giant stage and play like right here in a little ball? That was definitely like a huge panic the first time we played the Mainroom.

**Laura:** We were asking them if we could not have a drum riser. [laughing]

**Liz:** That stage is actually so small.

**Corrie:** We were so panicked about it and then you get up there and it's the size of Triple Rock. But we're definitely trying to connect with the audience.

**John:** It sounds like it's not much of an effort; it just comes naturally.



**Liz:** I think it's more difficult in bigger places. Riot Fest two years ago was easier because it was a little wilder and it was nighttime. We were the first band of our stage this year so it was like, "It's noon, who's ready to party?" [laughing] I guess it was 1 PM, but whatever. We were on the Paramore stage so all the Paramore super fans were in the front row watching us.

**Corrie:** They were there from the beginning of the morning and not moving. But I think that's a good crossover.

**Liz:** I agree. If you like Paramore, you might like Kitten Forever.

**Corrie:** It was the best core group audience that we could ask for at our security barrier.

**John:** You identify as a feminist band. Do you find the current political climate or social issues motivate your music or push you in a certain direction when you're writing or performing?

**Laura:** We have been a politically active band for as long as we've been a band, and we haven't necessarily gotten any more political because of the election, but I feel like it's more accessible for people to talk to us about it, or ask us about it. It's a conversation that's on the table for a lot more people than just us right now. In that sense, we get asked questions like that now when we didn't get asked questions like this seven years ago—not that we were doing interviews like this seven years ago.

I just feel that we have always identified as a feminist band. We've always been politically active and vocal, even if our songs don't necessarily directly reflect that. I personally feel more driven to be a creative person now than I am to up the ante on how we're coming across politically, because I think we already achieved that. I think there's always room for improvement, and I always think we could be doing more. My motivation is in the output, in being creative, to keep doing what we're doing, keep vocalizing what we're vocalizing, keep standing up for people we want to be standing up for, and for being a good advocate.

**Corrie:** It's nice now because the main thing that's different from when we first started is we didn't have other all-girl bands to play with. Our best friend band at the time was a weird two-piece electronic band called Unicorn Basement that we had nothing in common with. But we were friends. There was a really cool girl named Deanna Stegge in that band. It was like, "Oh, cool. Another girl in a band. Let's play together." On one hand, we forged a lot of unusual, creative friendships across genres. Now it's really cool to see the political climate change, and therefore the creative climate changes. More women than ever want to be in bands, which allows us to play with amazing bands. We've definitely had really cool opportunities to have bands come to us and say, "We're in a band because of seeing you play." All lofty political ideas aside, I feel like the most affirming thing you could hear is to have other teenage girls say, "I saw your band so now I'm in a band."

**Laura:** And that's like when we started, even before Kitten Forever, that was in the back of our heads: being in bands so we could encourage other girls to be in bands.

**Corrie:** I agree with Laura that we've always been a political band. It's cool to be in an environment that's constantly challenging you to not be stagnant in your politics. When we started you could just say, "I'm a feminist band," and everyone was like, "That's crazy." Now there's more of a discourse about what you're trying to say, who you're trying to advocate for, and all the intersectionality that comes with feminism today. Being in a creative climate like that is positive because it really challenges you to be more critical of yourself and your community—what you're capable of, what your friends are capable of. I think it's awesome. It's the kind of climate I could have never imagined playing music in.

**John:** Going off of that, what are some other Twin Cities bands that you would like people to know about?

**Corrie:** Sass, Tony Peachka, Sauna Accident.

**Laura:** Tiffani.

**Liz:** Scrunchies, Laura's other band.

**Laura:** Yeah, I just started it.

**Corrie:** Bruise Violet.

**Laura:** Royal Brat.

**Corrie:** I'm really obsessed with the girl Zina. There are literally so many bands in town now that it's more difficult to think of than it ever has been. We made this Google doc of all the women, fem, queer bands for booking shows. It became a thing that there were more of these bands than I could keep track of. I made this doc to make sure I was asking people who I wouldn't normally ask for booking cool diverse shows and not just playing with the same four fucking bands over and over again—which still kind of happens all the time in Minneapolis. The list started as being twenty or thirty bands, now it's one hundred and thirty or something. That's just what's active in the last couple of years, just in Minneapolis and St. Paul. That's crazy.

**John:** What obstacles or challenges did you—or do you—face as a band?

**Corrie:** I feel, starting up, we got really lucky to be in a really supportive community. We were starting up at a time and age where the house show scene, which runs in generational waves and dips up and down, was super active. We moved into our first punk house and started having shows right at the same time that four or five other houses were just starting around South Minneapolis in our neighborhood with kids all our age. We just dove right into being part of a scene, which was really gratifying. It was kind of a funny thing going on. There was a house called Two Pines that was the weird acoustic folk kid house. Our house was two blocks down the street on Lyndale and we were definitely the weird riot grrrl house.

**Liz:** Artsy punk house.

**Corrie:** There were the Sundowners kids and that was the pop punk house. Then the

kids who we were friends with in Unicorn Basement had a house (Castle Greyskull) and that was the electronic experimental house. We all supported each other in this way, that you'd get friends asking to book shows, and you'd say, "Well, it's not right for my house, but it's right for this house." But we would all still go.

When we first started, we weren't trying to play out of basements, so we didn't have to deal with a lot of that shit you deal with when you first start out as a band, especially as a girl band. You know—bookers, promoters, sound people, and rude other bands you're playing with—because we were just isolated in our own creative bubble of really supportive people. I feel like we hadn't really played out of our basement except a few times before we first got written about in *City Pages* (a local weekly). So by the time people were paying attention to our band, we had come to full fruition in a basement already. We were very self-aware and we weren't floundering a lot.

The first *City Pages* article about us, the writer later became a really good friend and was in a band we would play with all the time. I remember he told us his editors wanted to title the article "Pussy Control" and were like, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. That's not happening." He was like, "Okay, tight. I'll do something about it." I feel that because we had been a band for a while and were pretty confident in ourselves and our politics, it was really easy to be like, "No, you can't print that article like that." They were like, "Okay, we'll change it."

And they did, but I feel if you just first start out in a band and you don't have the support of a community around you—and building that confidence—you're kind of like, "Well, I want you to write about me." It can be scary to advocate for yourself. So we didn't have to deal with a lot of those things. And that's not because of anything inherent in us, but inherent in the support of the community we had.

**John:** So, when you started touring, did you stay within that DIY community and basement shows?

**Liz:** Yeah, the first tour we ever went on, Max from Unicorn Basement booked the whole thing. It was all really weird places he would love to play.

**Corrie:** Electronic kid houses. We were definitely on a weird electronic circuit the first couple of tours because that was the band we were touring with.

**Liz:** We toured with them a handful of times. Max booked the first one fully, then the second one I feel we shared duty.

**Corrie:** In the past year or so, we went on the Babes In Toyland tour which was all huge venues, then we went on tour with Royal Brat, and that was a mix of venues and DIY spaces. Then we just went on tour again ourselves, and that was all DIY spots, record stores, and whatever. I think we're in a funny position as a band where we've done several high profile, weird, big things, but we're still



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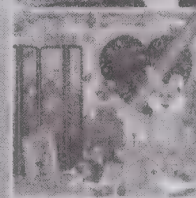
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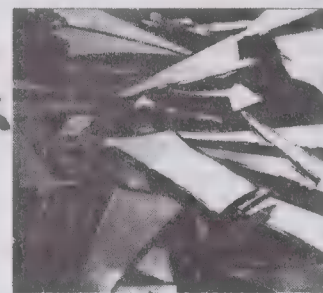
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a DIY band. I remember when we played in Kansas City at Revolution Records, a couple people came up to me before the show, and they were like, "I can't believe the show is here. Why is it at this record store?" And there were forty people there, it was a punk show. Sometimes people forget that's what we do, and those are the tours we go on.

**John:** Going back to what you were talking about with inspiring other bands, do you have any advice, or did you pass on any advice to bands starting up?

**Liz:** My go-to advice is always, "Just try it."

**Corrie:** We also didn't know how to play instruments when we first started. Some of us had never been in bands. Some of us had been in shitty bands. We were all doing the thing we weren't super comfortable doing that we didn't know how to do. We were just determined to make it up as we went and not care what people thought about it. Somehow, through no intention of ours, I feel like that translates and always has translated. I'm not sure if that's like still playing shitty and we don't care. [laughing]

**Laura:** It's so accessible.

**Corrie:** It's so accessible because it's so simple. Like, "I could do that. It's total garbage."

**Liz:** It's like people in art museums who are mad because someone just painted a black painting. They're like, "I could have done that shit," and you're like, "You didn't."

**Corrie:** I think that we just don't care, and we're playing music to have fun playing music. That's why we started doing it. I think that any time you see ■ band like that, that's what resonates with people.

**Laura:** And being in band with people you actually like and not just people who can play good solos. Having a good chemistry with them, whether it's writing music or just being friends and willing to make mistakes with each other. Just go down that road and try it.

**Corrie:** We still fuck up on stage all the time, giggle, and keep going. We make ■ weird look like, "Oh shit," and probably did that at the Mainroom.

**Liz:** Definitely at Riot Fest. [laughing]

**Laura:** Just keep bringing it up!

**Corrie:** I feel like the most uncomfortable thing ever is when you see a band play and they take themselves super seriously in any context—whether they fuck up and they're panicked or they say something about it or apologize.

**Liz:** Or they stop.

**Corrie:** Or if the audience isn't feeling it and the band says something about it.

**Liz:** I'm getting so excited. I love watching those things happen.

**Corrie:** Oh my god, I hate it.

**Liz:** No, it's torture.

**Corrie:** We just played a show with ■ band recently who did ■ thing where they were

like, "Thanks for your enthusiastic applause," to the unexcited audience.

**Liz:** I get so excited when that happens.

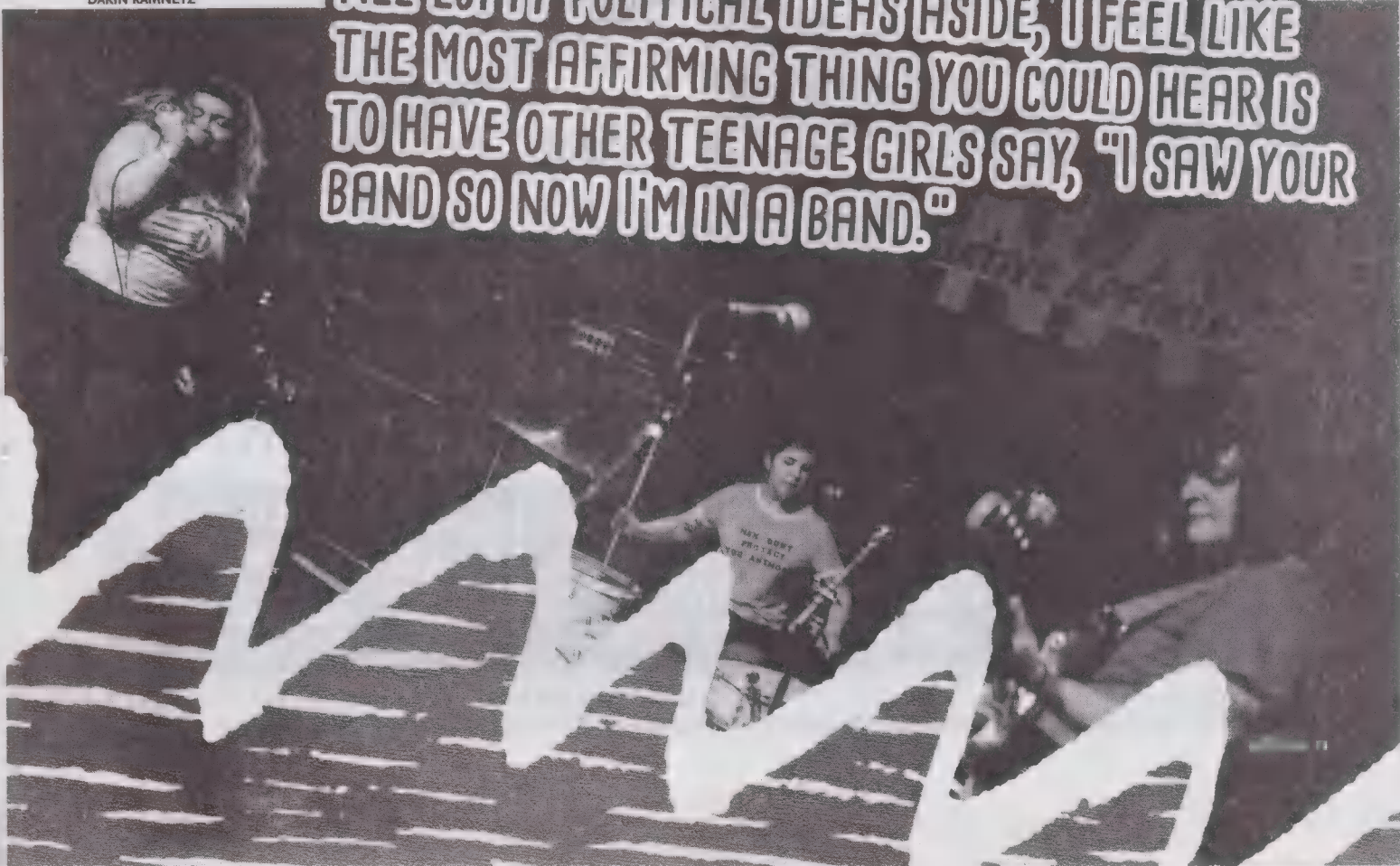
**Corrie:** It's so torturous to watch, because what you're saying is that you're letting it heavily affect you that people are not responding to what you're doing. I don't know if it's the chicken or the egg thing—are people not responding because you're taking yourself too seriously, or are you taking yourself too seriously because people aren't responding to what you're doing?

All I know is that when we played that show with the band that did that horrible thing, they played super fucking tight and were totally on it the whole time, with nice gear, and when we played we were definitely fucking up on our trash stuff. I don't care if anyone is into it or applauding. We're going to play the same show either way. That won't resonate with everyone, but for the people who it does resonate with, it's always super meaningful when you see ■ band like that.

**Laura:** I think it's really clear when you watch bands what their motivations are for playing music. I think it's really clear when you watch us that we're motivated by having ■ good time and not taking ourselves too seriously. You watch other bands and you're like, "Oh, you were that guy who started a band to meet girls, and you're still doing it even though you're forty now."

DARIN KAMNETZ

ALL LOFTY POLITICAL IDEAS ASIDE, I FEEL LIKE THE MOST AFFIRMING THING YOU COULD HEAR IS TO HAVE OTHER TEENAGE GIRLS SAY, "I SAW YOUR BAND SO NOW I'M IN A BAND."





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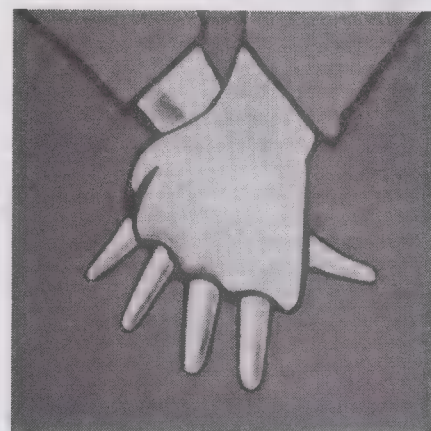
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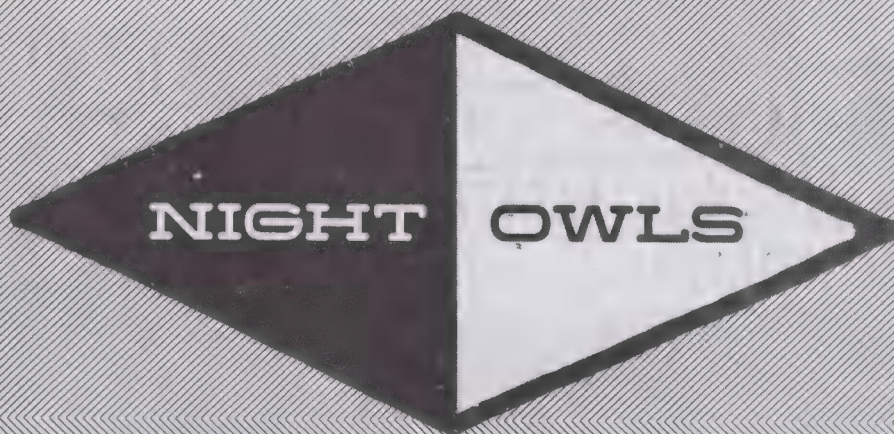
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# MY GO-TO ADVICE IS ALWAYS, "JUST TRY IT."

DARIN KAMINETZ

**Corrie:** For me, being in a band is this thing—to be a girl in a band—to talk about feminism and use art as politics. Being able to have a platform to do something. That's what's interesting to me, not necessarily to be a good bassist. I'm not saying that's the truth for the band, because we do care about being good at our instruments, in some regard.

**Liz:** And in different ways.

**Corrie:** You can always tell what a band's motivation is as an audience member. People performing think they can pull one over on you—or do some kind of performance for you that's going to alter your opinion of them—or create a false identity. I guess that works on a lot of people. A lot of people like stupid shit.

**Liz:** I like some stupid shit.

**John:** What's some stupid shit that you like?

**Liz:** [Sighs] There is so much. [Laughing] I really like dumb pop music. It's pretty much all I listen to.

**John:** You've talked about your love of pop music before, and you've talked about your love of punk rock. I feel like there are more people who are shedding that idea of guilty pleasure. It's just pleasure, it's just music, it's just fun, and your band really seems to embrace that idea.

**Corrie:** I was just having a conversation with someone the other night about the reason Kitten Forever—especially in the past few years—has a lot of intense crossover when it comes to people who can enjoy our band. A lot of that comes from some of the aspects that we're talking about: just kind of fun to watch, or not really caring, or something and that's exciting for people regardless of what sort of genre you're into. With the changing cultural climate, it's making lots of different music accessible to lots of different kinds of people and also making it much more accessible and interesting to find art that

other women are doing, whether or not it's in the genre you would like.

When you present a super punk aesthetically, there's a preconceived idea of what a band like that is going to be, and that's really inaccessible to a lot of people who don't necessarily want *punk*, but have no reason to not be interested in radical ideas, or counterculture, or politics. A lot of young girls who like our band aren't punk people. I think that when you make this choice to have a foot in both worlds and it's not super important to be punk all the time, then you're inviting a whole other group of people to like your punk band. That's super sick for us. And I think it's super limiting to not admit that you listen to Carly Rae Jepsen and Hanson.

**Liz:** I'm not trying to fool anyone.



# HOPS

## Andy Garcia

1. Hank Wood And The Hammerheads, Self-titled LP
2. Devil Master, Self-titled 7"
3. Haram, live at The Resident, 3/31/18
4. Futura, *Spit on the Flag 7"*
5. Alice Bag, *Blueprint LP*

## Anna Farr

- Drinks, *Hippo Lite*
- Ulli Lust, *Voices in the Dark*
- Efrim Menuck, *Pissing Stars*
- No Age, *Snares like a Haircut*
- Czarface And MF DOOM, *Czarface Meets Metal Face*

## Art Ettinger

- 33 1/3: *Jawbreaker's 24 Hour Revenge Therapy* (or, *The Strange Death of Selling Out*) by Ronen Givony (book)
- The Brass, *Our Own Path LP*
- The Droogettes, *Clockwork Girls LP*
- Hop Along, *Bark Your Head Off, Dog LP*
- The Bombpops, *Dear Beer 7"*

## Bill Pinkel

- Hot Snakes, *Jericho Sirens LP*
- Canadian Rifle, *Peaceful Death LP*
- Culture Abuse, *Peach LP*
- Shannon And The Clams, *Onion LP*
- Jawbreaker, live at the Palladium!

## Billy Kostka

- Hank Wood And The Hammerheads, Self-titled LP
- Aquarium LP
- The Fritz LP
- Sun Araw, *LIVEPHREAXX!!!!*
- X-20, *Peep-Hole*

## Camylle Reynolds

- Debauch-a-Reno III: the Sticker Guy! 25th Anniv. Bash!*
1. Reigning Sound fucking blew my mind
  2. Outside Mummies set, Reverend Beat-Man, and Nightmare Boyzzz
  3. Hangover cure at Canter's Delicatessen
  4. Neck Chop Records booth at the Reno Vinyl Record Fair
  5. Playing with the Midnite Snaxxx, of course, and getting my first and only Snaxxx tattoo

## Chad Williams

1. Descendents, *Who We Are 7"*
2. War On Women, *Capture the Flag LP*
3. The Wanna-Bes, *Out Went the Lights LP*
4. Midnight, *Sweet Death and Ecstasy LP*
5. DeeCracks, *Sonic Delusions LP*

## Chris Mason

1. Future Virgins, *Doomsday Raga*
2. Silent Era, *O Horizon*
3. Mount Eerie, *Here Now*
4. Screaming Females, *All at Once*
5. Superchunk, *What a Time to Be Alive*

## Chris Terry

- Totally Slow, *Imperium EP*
- Jean Grae & Quelle Chris, *Everything Is Fine LP*
- Turnstile, *Time & Space LP*
- *The Hate U Give*, Angie Thomas (novel)
- *This Is Memorial Device*, David Keenan (novel)

## Craven Rock

1. *Conflict Is Not Abuse* by Sarah Schulman (book)
2. Taking Improv 101 class at Jet City Improv
3. *Disaster Artist* by Greg Sestero and Tom Bissel (book)

4. Tie: T.S.O.L., The Derelicts, Dreadful Children at El Corazon and Jordan O' Jordan, Sara Renberg at Woodland Theater
5. L'il B, *I'm Gay (I'm Happy)*

## Cynthia Pinedo

- 5 *Spring Jams*
1. Screaming Females *All at Once*, especially "I'll Make You Sorry" and "Glasshouse."
  2. Frankie Cosmos, *Vessel*. Dreamy indie pop. "Being Alive" is my favorite track.
  3. Mean Jeans, *Jingles*
  4. Caves, *Always Why*
  5. Beth Ditto at the Glasshouse on 3/24/18

## Daryl Gussin

- Hot Snakes, *Jericho Sirens LP*
- Pinned In Place, *Rubbernecking at the Gates of Hell CS*
- Shark Toys, *Labyrinths LP* and live
- Vnlvx, *Is Unlux CS* and live
- Limp Wrist, live

## Designated Dale

1. Molotov unplugged recording at Quarry Studios in Mexico City. The DF's own rock it out acoustic style with a few special guests. Television/DVD to follow later this year.
2. The Hates, Mish Bondage, and La Tuya at Cafe NELA. The older set still bringing the noise to the masses.
3. Mike Watt & The Missingmen at Pop Obscure Records. Holy shit!
4. Congratulations to Larry and Martha May for tying the knot this past March. Let the rock gods smile upon thee.
5. The Vapors debut, *New Clear Days*. Forgot how darn great this LP is. Dig it out when you get a chance.

## Eden Kittiver

1. Hop Along, *Bark Your Head Off, Dog*
2. Alice Bag, *Blueprint*
3. Free Throw, *Missing Pieces*

4. War On Women, *Capture the Flag*
5. Red City Radio, *SkyTigers*

## Eric Baskauskas

1. Weird Al and Emo Philips, live in Chicago
2. Doom Orchestra, live in Copenhagen
3. C.H.E.W., live in Chicago outside in the middle of the day in the middle of winter
4. Rash / C.H.E.W., *Split 7"*
5. Mammoth Grinder, live in Chicago

## Gabby Gonzalez

- Punk of Today*
- Love Fiend
  - Vaguess
  - Modpods
  - Media Jeweler
  - Tracy Bryant

## Jennifer Federico

- Top 5 Bands When I'm Feeling Down Under*
1. Total Control
  2. The Birthday Party
  3. Subversion
  4. Straight Arrows
  5. Eddy Current Suppression Ring

## Jimmy Alvarado

- Wu Tang Clan, *Wu Tang Forever 2 x CD*
- The Hates, Mish Bondage And The Bloses, La Tuya at Café NELA, 3/31/18
- Mike Watt & The Missingmen at Pop Obscure Records, 3/31/18
- *Safety in Numbers*, by Adam Wilson (book)
- Thelonius Monk Quartet, *At Carnegie Hall CD*

## Joe Dana

1. Last minute road trip to S.F. to catch the Bananas and Fleshes at the Knock Out
2. Last minute decision to see Jawbreaker for just \$6 on Stubhub just a short walk from my house

# Millions of Dead Hops



3. Dan Savage's Hump Film Festival, Amateur Porn Film Festival at the Downtown Independent Theater  
 4. DJing with Kash Abdulmalik for "Sex and Violence" at 82, tie with DJing with Jeff Proctor for "With Special Guest Joe Dana" at 82  
 5. Razorcake Hearts Drinking Beer and Listening to Records at Footsies in Los Angeles—second Saturday of every month

Jon Mullen

#### Next Punk-Ber Market Pairings...

- Bad Grains
- Black Ales in the Sunset
- Double Cervezas on the Lime
- Millions of Dead Hops
- Q: Are we not 21?
- A: We are thirsty!

Juan Espinosa

- Witch Trial, Self-titled 12" EP
- Bend Sinister, *Tape 2* LP
- Cadaver Dog, *Dying Breed* LP, tie with Suburbanite, Self-titled LP
- No Age, *Snares like a Haircut* LP
- Bad Religion, *Stranger than Fiction* LP reissue

Kayla Greet

1. Red Dons, Criminal Code, Nux Novacula at Clock Out Lounge, Seattle and Red Dons, Piss Test, Broken Spirit at Black Water, Portland. Thanks for driving Toby!
2. Neighborhood Brats and Dead Bars at Victory Lounge, Seattle
3. Dee Cracks, *Sonic Delusions*
4. Lost Balloons at Victory Lounge, Seattle
5. Hop Along, *Bark Your Head Off*, Dog

Kevin Dunn

1. Raging Nathans, *Cheap Fame* LP
2. 50 Foot Wave, *Bath White* EP
3. Sarchasm, *Tides* EP
4. Shrimps, *Solid* LP
5. The Mons, *Trust No One* LP

Kurt Morris

1. Shame, *Songs of Praise*
2. Hot Snakes, *Jericho Sirens*
3. Crusades, *This Is a Sickness...*
4. Slayer (everything)
5. Black Flag, *Damaged*

MariNaomi

*Five New Tricks This Old Dog Has Been Learning As of Late*  
 1. The joy of pot  
 2. The joy of iPad Pro  
 3. Venmo  
 4. That's it, I'm too old and stoned.

Mark Twistworthy

- Gino And The Goons, *Rip It Up!* LP
- Yard Work, *Earn the Rock* LP
- Shame, *Songs of Praise* LP
- The Shifters, Self-titled LP
- Vlaar, Self-titled LP

Marty Ploy

- Mind Spiders, *Furies*
- None More Black, *This Is Satire*
- Partial Traces, *Glass Beach*
- Future Virgins, *Doomsday Raga*
- Ursula, *Meet Is Murder*

Megan Razzetti

1. Gezan (Japan)
2. Mean Jeans, *Jingles Collection*
3. Kississippi, *Sunset Blush*
4. Alice Bag record release show with Trap Girl and Fatty Cakes And The Puff Pastries
5. SZA, *20 Something*

Michael T. Fournier

- Superchunk, *What a Time to Be Alive* LP, and live at Sinclair, Cambridge, Mass. 4/6/18
- Screaming Females, *All at Once 2* x LP and live at Sue's, Rollinsford, N.H. 4/9/18 and at Flywheel, Easthampton, Mass. 4/11/18
- Messthetics debut LP and live at Space, Hamden, Conn. 4/19/18
- ExMaid, *Fair Sex* LP
- Hot Snakes, *Jericho Sirens* LP

Mike Faloon

1. Future Virgins, *Doomsday Raga* LP
2. Mind Spiders, *Prosthesis* LP
3. Keb' Mo' & Taj Mahal, "Diving Duck Blues"
4. Tomeka Reid Quartet, Self-titled CD
5. Superchunk, *What a Time to Be Alive* LP

Mike Frame

- Camp Cope, *How to Socialise and Make Friends* CD
- Alice Cooper, first seven albums
- Enamorados, Self-titled LP
- Blaze Foley, *Lost Muscle Shoals*
- Cheetah Chrome & Mike Hudson, *Downtown Beirut 7"*

Paul Comeau

*Top 5 Summer Albums*  
 1. H2O, *Thicker Than Water*  
 2. Madball, *Set It Off*  
 3. 7 Seconds, *Walk Together, Rock Together*  
 4. AC/DC, *High Voltage*  
 5. Boogie Down Productions, *By All Means Necessary*

Paul Silver

1. Hot Snakes, The Widows, Sumatraban at The Casbah, San Diego
2. Spanish Love Songs, *Schmaltz* LP
3. Gütara KYÖ, *Destroy All Gondolas*, Razor Nights at Til-Two Club, San Diego
4. The Shell Corporation, *Fucked* LP
5. The Fur Coats, *Milkdromeda* EP

Replay Dave

- Die Hoffnung, *Elegies and Creation Songs* LP
- Demo, Self-titled LP
- Ariel Gore, *We Were Witches* (novel)
- Radkey, *Dark Black Makeup* LP
- Descendents, *Hypercaffium Spazzimate* LP

Rev. [redacted]

- Rubs, *Impossible Dream* LP
- Real Kids, *The Kids 1974 Demos/The Real Kids 1977/78 Demos/Live* CD+Book
- Ruler, "Tiger" b/w "Gimme Some Noise" 45
- Telephone Lovers, Self-titled LP
- Giuda, "Rock'n'Roll Music" b/w "Born Under a Bad Sign" 45

Rich Cocksedge

- Idles, live at The Hub, Plymouth, U.K.
- The Palatines, *Death from Below* LP
- Various Artists, *Typical Girls Volume 3* LP
- Krimewatch, Self-titled LP
- Mod Con, *Modern Convenience*

Ryan Nichols

1. Moaning, Self-titled LP
2. Johnny Marr, *Set the Boy Free* (book)
3. Soft Kill
4. Actors, *It Will Come to You* LP
5. Choir Boy

Sean Arenas

- Hot Snakes, *Jericho Sirens* LP
- Ruler, "Tiger" b/w "Gimme Some Noise" 7"
- Sidetracked / Rabid Pigs, *Split 7"*
- NOMOS 751, Self-titled LP
- Digital Leather, *Pink Thunder* LP

Sean Koepenick

*Digital Only Releases*  
 1. Rise Defy, *Demo*  
 2. Fireburn Shine/Controller  
 3. Two Man Advantage, *Live at CBGB's 8/4/02*  
 4. The Tenafl Vipers, *Reverse Tilt Action*  
 5. Channels, *Backfeifengesicht/Airstrip One*

Theresa W.

*Top 5 Sunny Driving Songs*  
 1. Kindling, "Blind Wave"  
 2. Kill Creek, "Cosmetic Surgery"  
 3. Mutoid Man, "Melt Your Mind"  
 4. Uncle Tupelo, "Gun"  
 5. Bitchin', "Bargained"

Toby Tober

*Top 5 Movies I have Recently Enjoyed*  
 1. Killing of a Sacred Deer  
 2. The Insult  
 3. Before We Vanish  
 4. Pushing Dead  
 5. The Honeymoon Stand Up Special

Todd Taylor

- Alice Bag, *Blueprint* LP and live
- Hot Snakes, *Jericho Sirens* LP
- Future Virgins, *Doomsday Raga* LP
- A Brief History of Seven Killings by Marlon James (book) and Johnnie Jungleguts, *Life Sex Fandom* (book)
- Bundles, *Deaf Dogs* LP
- Amyl And The Sniffers, *Big Attraction/Giddy Up 12"*

Ty Stranglehold

1. Hot Snakes, *Jericho Sirens* LP
2. Mind Spiders, *Furies* LP
3. Alice Bag, *Blueprint* LP
4. Neighborhood Brats, *Night Shift 7"*
5. The Fritz, Self-titled LP





## ACTORS: *It Will Come to You*: LP

These Canadians have been releasing amazing single after amazing single over the past few years, finally leading up to this perfect record. If you're a fan of post-punk, new wave, or anything closely related to those genres, then you need this record. The songs are all sharp in production, sexy, dark, and gorgeous in sound. Highly recommended. —Ryan Nichols (Artofact, [artofact@artofact.com](mailto:artofact@artofact.com))

## AGGRAVATED ASSAULT NYC:

### *The Struggle*: CDEP-R

Not to be confused with the white power band that came later, this EP is from the newly reformed Aggravated Assault that originated in New York in the mid-'80s. They've added NYC to the end of their name to dispel confusion with the other, better-known band. This Aggravated Assault originally had Doug Beans from Murphy's Law on drums. A killer video of them from 1986 is on YouTube. This release self-describes as an EP and contains two excellent NYHC tracks, "The Struggle" and "N.Y. 2K." The intense, powerfully tough vocals are by Anthony from Functional Idiots. I'm excited for the return of this group, and I look forward to a proper EP or full-length in the near future. —Art Ettinger (Self-released, [aggravated.assault.nyc@gmail.com](mailto:aggravated.assault.nyc@gmail.com))

## AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS:

### *Big Attraction* & *Giddy Up*: LP

Crunchy, punchy '70s punk meets '80s power pop from Australia. It's a seedy romp in the most classic rock'n'roll fashion. Raunchy and lewd and not giving a fuck. While the A side is pure sex, the B side reveals a more introspective side of the Sniffers: contemplating mortality, looking for escape to a better life, and the subsequent ode to a lost "pushbike." Had to look up what that was. It's a bike. Very curious to see what the future holds for Amyl And The Sniffers, because what we have here is very promising. —Daryl (Homeless)

## ANIMALS: Self-titled: LP

Decent tough garage punk from Santiago, Chile. Relentless and full of gang vocals, probably a good party band if you want your party to be the right level of insane. This record should come with a six pack and should be played very loud on Saturday nights. —Matt Werts (Slovenly, [slovenly.com](http://slovenly.com) / Algo, [alгореcords.com](http://alгореcords.com))

## ARMEDALITE RIFLES, THE: *Revel*

### *Beauty of the Sour Note*: LP

Putrid pop punk that dabbles in being experimental which comes off sounding forced and all around pretentious. Bleh... This album is disjointed and sounds like a collection of outtakes. —Matt Average (Wrinky Dink, [blurringabnormalities.com](http://blurringabnormalities.com))

## BABYLON: *Back to the Brink*: 7" EP

Heavy '80s Brit-influenced hardcore, particularly the stuff Clay Records

# RECORD REVIEWS



That's right, this album is so good it made me fucking cry. Take that as you will.

—Ty Stranglehold

Hot Snakes, Jericho Streets LP

was putting out back then, from a buncha malcontents from Seattle. They do the sound justice, with lotsa fuzz, growling vocals, and such. —Jimmy Alvarado (Babylon, [streetsofbabylon.com](http://streetsofbabylon.com))

## BAD MOJOS / KICK IT!: Split: 7"

A great split coming out of Europe. First up we have Bad Mojos from Switzerland. Two blasts of lo-fi brain damage that makes me think they have a Spits record or two in their collections. I dug this enough to search them out on Bandcamp and buy a full-length album. On the flip we have Kick It! from Germany. Great hardcore punk in the vein of Funeral Oration or Autistic Youth. I picked up a full-length of theirs online as well. Both these bands are firmly on my radar now. Give 'em a spin! —Ty Stranglehold (Kink, [kinkrecords.de](http://kinkrecords.de))

## BEDFORD FALLS: *Send More Bees*: CD

It has become clear to me that we are living in a resurgence of the music of the '90s. While many may blanch at the thought, I'm alright with it. Bedford Falls must be happy. The Welsh band has been around for fifteen years, but their heartfelt Replacements meets Lemonheads delivery is probably sounding fresher than it has in years. Let me put it this way; when I was eighteen, I would most likely be listening to this non-stop. When I was twenty-two I would have shunned it because it wasn't "punk" enough. Today (at forty-four, if you're keeping track) I only separate music into stuff I like, and stuff I don't and I really like Bedford Falls. —Ty Stranglehold (Boss Tuneage, [bosstuneage.bigcartel.com](http://bosstuneage.bigcartel.com))

## BEDFORD FALLS: *Send More Bees*: LP

Welsh dudes who've apparently been around for some time. They're convincing enough—this is a pensive, morose batch of songs that hearken back to '90s indie guitar pop shit without sounding cloying or kowtowing. It's a bummer of a record, dense with atmosphere, and all in all it sounds pretty good. —Keith Rosson (Brassneck)

## BEND SINISTER: *Tape 2*: LP

A while back I thought to myself "What would the perfect garage noise band sound like if it ever could exist?" I dreamt up a scenario where this could be achievable whilst being completely oblivious to Bend Sinister or the A Frames (who they later came to be). After listening to this collection of tracks, I've concluded that there is no need for anyone to try anymore: Bend Sinister was that perfect band. Listening to these songs I can't help but imagine a band rehearsing in the laundry room of a shitty apartment building by guys who could give half a shit if they were to be caught. You like Wrangler Brutes, Retainers, or any band on Rip Off Records? That's nice but Bend Sinister rends all those bands and several others obsolete. There's only four hundred copies of this floating around out there so don't sleep. —Juan Espinosa (Homeless, [homelessrecords.bandcamp.com](http://homelessrecords.bandcamp.com))

## BETA BOYS: *Brick Walls*: 7"

Two tracks of noisy distorto-punk. "Brick Walls" is a slow-burn jam, fucked yet catchy in an earwormy way, while the flip, "Littered Streets," barrels in and thrashes things up for a minute and a half before heading for the exit. Prime pickin's for wrecking

your hearing. —Jimmy Alvarado (Total Punk, [floridasdying.com](http://floridasdying.com))

## BLACK ADIDAS: Self-titled: LP

You had me at Black Adidas. This is definitely a less-is-more kind of rock'n'roll band. Musically approaching rock'n'roll the way The Icarus Line used to, with a moody, sexy, punk attitude. Their subject matter, on the other hand, is straight forward, with no BS, which is executed right away with the opener, "Free Shit." —Ryan Nichols (Digital Analog Records, [blackadidasmusic@gmail.com](http://blackadidasmusic@gmail.com))

## BLACK BLUEBIRDS:

### *Like Blood for Music*: CD

Do you remember that scene in the movie *Ghost World* where Steve Buscemi's character goes to see a legendary blues guitarist open for a cheeseball blues-rock act called Blues Hammer? Now bear with me and imagine that Ian Curtis somehow lived, and many years later was washed up and trying to eke out a living playing any gig he could get. He would be touring the land opening for Black Bluebirds. It is unsettling to me how much I dislike this. It's as if you took the aforementioned Joy Division frontman, mixed him with a mid-'90s version of Bruce Springsteen, and sucked out all the lyric writing ability. Throw in some ripping Blues Hammeresque leads, weird keyboards, and corny backups... This is all kinds of wrong. —Ty Stranglehold (Tinderbox Music)

## BOBBY FUNK: *Avocado Stains*: 7"

I saw Bobby Funk a couple of years ago and was impressed at how good the band was live. It had that something special about it which helped the band stand out from many others, both new and old. The music sounded fresh, although without being unique, and the band appeared to be having a great time on stage, which added to the infectious nature of the show. For my sins I've missed Bobby Funk a few times since then but this avocado shaped—I kid you not—record is a fitting reminder of what I enjoyed about them that night. With a dash of humor and irreverence, reminiscent of Wonk Unit, backed up with a hint of attitude, this is a band worth keeping an eye on. —Rich Cocksedge (TNS, [info@tnsrecords.co.uk](mailto:info@tnsrecords.co.uk) / [tnsrecords.co.uk](http://tnsrecords.co.uk) / Autonomonster, [autonomonsterecords.bigcartel.com](http://autonomonsterecords.bigcartel.com)/Krautpop!)

## BOOZE AND GLORY:

### *Reggae Sessions Vol 1: 3* EP

Triple pack of reggae versions of longtime London Oki merchants' songs. I love my rocksteady and reggae—and these versions work just fine—but are they really necessary? Decent enough tunes, but if I'm going to listen to reggae, I'll listen to the greats. Each 7" has a stereo and a mono version of each song which is overkill too, as I couldn't tell the difference. Fans of two tone, rocksteady, and the Booze And Glory would probably get a kick out of this, but I can't see me spinning this again. —Tim Brooks (Pirates Press)



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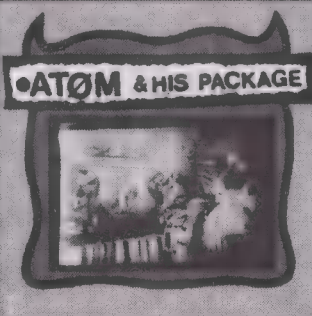
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### BOWS: *Never Unite: 7"*

Bows is ■ Japanese melodic punk band. This three track-EP mixed melodic punk and howled vocals into ■ neat release. The first track, "Neverunite," features extremely growly vocals over some mostly pop punk instrumentation that occasionally veered off into experimentation. The next two tracks, "Against the Wave of Depression" and "Why Does It Always End Up Like This" sound very similar. This group has ■ interesting sound that a lot of melodic punk fans would enjoy, but ends up ■ little repetitive. They'll certainly be ■ interesting group to keep ■ eye on, but this release was ■ little bit wearisome (which is something of an achievement for a 7"). —Anna Farr (Brassneck, brassneckrecords.bandcamp.com)

### BREEDERS, THE: *All Nerve: LP*

It's 2018 and I am reviewing ■ new Breeders album. I can't quite wrap my head around that. From the first note of the first track, I ■ instantly taken back to my late teens. Kim Deal's unearthly voice impossibly sounds exactly like it did twenty-five years ago and the music picks up ■ if the band never went away. I read somewhere recently that the band considers this album the true follow up to their magnum opus, 1993's *Last Splash*, and I fully agree. With lilting surf guitar, off-kilter changes, and cryptic lyrics, the band embraces what it is, and what it has achieved in the past without becoming

■ nostalgic rehash. The world still needs The Breeders. We just didn't realize it until now. —Ty Stranglehold (4AD, 4ad.com)

### BRUISER QUEEN: *Heavy High: LP*

Whoa-oh- and ooh-heavy garage pop punk. I've heard plenty of combinations of those sounds, but Bruiser Queen puts the '60s pop influence front and center, from the soulful vocal harmonies to the well-placed hand-clap and organ parts. "Have Fun" is simultaneously ■ total banger and chill as fuck. I have to mention that the album art is one of the best things about this release— whoever was responsible for the carnival photographs, you nailed it. —Indiana Laub (Certified PR, certifiedprrecords.com)

### BUNDLES: *Deaf Dogs: LP*

I mean, the end of 2018's ■ ways away, but damn if *Deaf Dogs* isn't contending for album of the year for me. Holy cow. I loved last year's split LP with Dan Webb & The Spiders, and now there's twelve new songs to freak out over. They're short, compact, frantic, rough-hewn, ferocious and catchy songs, and just about perfect. See, Bundles—and this is important, folks—is one of those bands in which I have zero idea ■ to what they're saying, but they say it with such emotion and conviction that I am wholeheartedly convinced anyway. "If I'm convicted, I'll resign. But I've killed all the judges and it feels right. Now I'm taking hostages and bullet wounds and

all I think about—you just move the way I like." I... you got me, guys. No fucking clue what you mean in any of this stuff, but there is such inherent, unbridled passion in these twelve songs, and buoyancy and joy and anger and teeth, that I just love it anyway. Catchy and fierce and recommended. I really hope they tour here. Punk. —Keith Rosson (Gunner USA)

### BUZZBOMB:

#### *Sixty Miles of Bad Road: LP/CD*

On seeing the excellent cover art provided by Patrick Goddard, known for his work on the Judge Dredd and 2000AD comics, I was really hoping that the music would live up to his efforts because I really wanted to order ■ Buzzbomb shirt featuring that artwork. Having listened to the album a couple of times, I realised that my shirt collection would soon be increasing—much to the chagrin of my wife—as I found myself partial to the brand of punk'n'roll this outfit had laid down. Nine self-penned tunes and ■ belting version of Johnny Thunders And The Heartbreakers' "Born to Lose" provide ■ foot stomping, head nodding, and air guitar playing experience. A really good album from this Scottish band. —Rich Cocksedge (Self-released, billy@buzzbomb.co.uk)

### CASTRO: *Infidelity: CD*

Castro features erstwhile members of Angor Wat and Israelvis. On the whole it made me think of 999 or Sweatmaster with Geddy Lee

singing, and thus compelled me to acknowledge that Geddy Lee's vocal are not the reason for my dislike of Rush. This is a solid outing of crisp, almost angular rock'n'roll. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Boss Tuneage)

### HAVE CURSE: *Future Dust: LP*

A synth punk project by members of the Hussy with ■ heavy Jay Reatard and Lost Sounds influence. Nothing ground breaking but also not dismissible: it is what it is. On a totally unrelated but completely pertinent note: Peter of the P. Trash label (that co-released this record) has passed away and so this record marks the end of the imprint. Condolences to his family and anyone else that was affected by his untimely passing. —Juan Espinosa (P. Trash / FDH)

### CAVEMEN, THE: *Nuke Earth: CD*

If I didn't know better, I would swear this was a *Horror Stories*-era Dwarves record. In all ways it sounds similar, right down to the pitch of the snarling vocals and the eerie, reverberated guitars and organ. Even the lyrical content rides the same road, for the most part. So, since I like that aforementioned Dwarves record, I liked this. It's dirty, trashy, and speaks to my inner degenerate. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

### CAVEMEN, THE: *Nuke Earth: LP*

Killer, thriller garage punk from New Zealand. The Cavemen attack you with their songs using reverb-soaked

## REFLECTIVE TAPES

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- REF-61 LONG GONE "SEVEN SONGS"  
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- REF-62 TRUST FALL EP  
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- REF-63 SPECIAL MOVES EP  
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guitars, ■ hyped-up rhythm section, and ■ semi-belligerent vocalist, who at times reminds ■ of Ian Svenonius (Nation Of Ulysses, The Make-Up, Chain And The Gang, et cetera). It's reckless, filthy, and devoid of concern for their fellow man. Tres punk! "7 Day Weekend," the screed against the nine-to-five grind, is a scorcher that nearly tips into early '80s hardcore straight off the *American Youth Report* comp. Is it me, or does the first verse on "The Night Jimmy Savile Died" sound eerily similar to Thee Headcoats "A Town Named Squaresville"? In the meantime, while we're sending out the sonic sleuths to get it sorted out, get this record! —Matt Average (Slovenly)

**CHARLIE REED: "Love Hangover" b/w "Just a Little": 7"**

This record is ■ brief foray into folk rock, incorporating garage influences into a little release fleshed out over two tracks. This artist evokes the sound of San Francisco musician White Fence mixed with some clearly Beatles influences. It's a nice project that fans of folk, chilled-out garage, and psych rock fans would very likely enjoy. —Anna Farr (Randy, randyrecords.bigcartel.com)

**CHILLER: Self-titled: LP**

Dark, punky garage pop. They attack the tunes with an "every song is an anthem" fervor, putting an extra bit of oomph in the drive and causing images of mangled picks and cuticles to float

in the noggin amidst all the minor chords. Great stuff here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirt Cult, dirtcultrecords.wordpress.com)

**COWBOYS, THE:**

**Live at Tony's Garage: 7" EP**

Live, this band seems puzzlingly uncomfortable, like a high school band under the lights at ■ school talent show. Even on the cover photo, the guys with guitars look like they're trying to hide behind them and the guys without guitars are trying to hide behind the guys who do have guitars; the whole photo is arranged like their collective grandma told them to move closer together and hold still. Even their cover of long-enduring garage standard "The Witch" by the Sonics bears some odd parallel to the *de rigueur* cover of "Takin' Care of Business" played by roughly one hundred percent of the non-punk high school bands of my day. Yet, somehow, awash in the darkness, these guys often manage to sound like a lo-fi (if you ask me, it sounds more like *Don Zientara's* garage) Rip Off Records version of second album Saints (hold the brass)—no mean feat when none of their originals break the two-minute barrier and the songs were, you know, *literally recorded in a garage*. Being compared to a lo-fi second-album Saints constitutes a positive review, by the way. *Even a Packer fan will like these Cowboys!* BEST SONG: "Mint Condition." BEST SONG TITLE: "Sittin' Pretty"

FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This is the first time I can remember seeing a disassembled drum set on ■ record cover —Rev. Nørb (Feel It, feelitrecordshop.com)

**COWBOYS, THE: Vol. 4: LP**

Tuneful and bouncy garage/power pop with intricate melodies and guitar leads. On paper, this Bloomington band seems good, but there's something off about this—like when vintage jeans cost more than new ones. This is the vinyl version of ■ cassette from a couple years ago with ten songs on 45. —Chris Terry (Feel It, feelitrecordshop.com)

**CRAMMM: "Prohibido" b/w "Ruin": CS**

This tape is interesting, in the good way. Two songs, one deliciously lavender cassette, no info besides the band name, website url, and then on the website no info beyond these two songs for your listening pleasure. It's ■ information feedback loop that mirrors the insular world of the two songs, "Prohibido" and "Ruin." Sort of what you'd expect from a pretty stripped-down experimental two piece, but what ended up turning me from semi-interested to into it is the injection of ■ lo-fi Beat Happening influence that can cut the melodic edge of the scuzzy Dead Meadow background. Though I probably would have already put it on my cassette shelf because the color breaks up all the black that's already there, I'll take it down and listen to it when the sun

starts coming out and I just want to be ■ layabout in my lazy, smoky living room. —Theresa W. (Self-released)

**CRUNCHCOAT: Obsolete: CD**

I'd like to first off thank Crunchcoat for helping me figure out that one of my cassette players was busted. Having been familiar with Danny Bailey's other bands (Pillow Fights, Jabber), I was really confused when Alvin And The Chipmunks-style vocals popped through my speakers. But when I switched over to my boombox, ■ much more enjoyable sound came out. In the real version of this EP we get songs about how awesome November is, ■ well as missing the California sun in "Homesick." The tracks are quick pop punk gems with Sarge-like vocals and a hint of late '90s college rock. Thus far I have yet to be less than in love with anything Danny puts out, and she continues this trailblazing with her latest project. Not nearly ■ obsolete as the title may suggest, especially when they come in these gorgeous blue and silver cassettes. —Kayla Greet (Self-released)

**CRUZ DE NAVAJAS: Dominacion: LP**

Cold, somber post-punk from Mexico City with some bursts and tantrums thrown in to keep things interesting. Alaska Y Los Pegamoides and Belgrado are clear influences, so if you can roll with either you will appreciate Cruz De Navajas. —Juan Espinosa (Going Underground, cruzdenavajas.bandcamp.com)

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#### DEAD HERO: La Vi Continua: LP

Colombian oi that largely takes its cues from '80s U.K. stuff, though the guitarist occasionally adds a flanger effect to his guitar that sounds suspiciously like it was pilfered from The Cult. Songs are catchy and anthemic, they should be for this type of tunes, and blissfully free of the meathead musical trappings that often go hand in hand with the genre. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sabotage, sabotagerecords.net)

#### DEECRACKS: *Sonic Delusions*: LP

DeeCRACKS are from Wien, Austria and have quite the following. That'll happen when you kick ass for so long. Pop punk will never die long there are bands this earnest in that scene. Well-produced, but not obnoxiously so, this LP is their best release to date. I've been to their shows, and I can say from first-hand experience that this album captures their live energy perfectly. It's their Pirates Press debut, but they've been around for fifteen years. It's rare for a band that's been around that long to deliver its best material at that point in their career, but *Sonic Delusions* is simply remarkable. —Art Ettinger (Pirates Press)

#### DELETIONS: *Archives*: CS

Weirdo outsider synth/post punk that borrows less from the dancey goth side of things and more from the droney Screamers/Units style. It's not aggressive and I feel like these guys

probably more into the Mothers Of Invention (listen to the way they deliver the lyrics on "Poverty Police" and tell me you disagree) than Oppenheimer's Analysis, but I'm not saying one or the other is a bad thing. This seems like it could be a full length on its own—as even though it's decidedly lo-fi, the recording fits the style—so I'm not sure if this cassette is a prelude to a more polished recording to this band or a finalized document in itself. —Ian Wise (Self-released, deletions.bandcamp.com)

#### DHARMA DOGS: *Music for the Terminally Bored*: CS

Dharma Dogs is a punk band active in Wisconsin since 2011. This cassette further elaborates upon the fuzzy sound they've been developing for years. The first two tracks, "Laxadaisy" and "Fluke or Flounder," kick off the record with some classic-sounding (though tinted with grunge influence) punk, occasionally dipping into more emotive and screamed vocals. The vocals on "Billboard Blues" delved into a bluesy and psychedelic realm, over garage instrumentation similar to that of the first two tracks. The record gets fastest and most aggressive with "Black Mayonnaise," a confrontational, six-minute-long riot accompanied with shouted vocals. The album is finished with a grab bag of more garage-sounding punk, some poignant (if not a little repetitive) guitar instrumentation, and occasionally screamed vocals.

Alternative-sounding guitar work is speckled throughout the album, but doesn't end up adding all that much. This record is generally fun (yet occasionally tedious) release that fans of old school punk, alternative, grunge, and garage rock would probably enjoy, but it isn't particularly thrilling either. —Anna Farr (Muzai, muzairecords.com)

#### DIGITAL LEATHER: *Pink Thunder*: LP

Digital Leather is a synth pop outfit led by Omaha transplant Shawn Foree. With thumping beats and lush choruses, Foree blends the gloom and doom of Bauhaus and Joy Division with the twee minimalism of The Robot Ate Me. Named after a pink dildo that the band brought on tour with them, *Pink Thunder* is a meticulously composed record that's often monotonous, which honestly adds to the overall effect. Like an ASMR video, Foree's repetitive arrangements, fuzzy synths, and reverb-drenched vocals send tingles down my spine, making songs like "Restaurant" and "Plans for the Future" perfect for relaxing. Put this record on loud, turn the lights off, and find the most comfortable corner of your bed. Let yourself be washed away. —Sean Arenas (P. Trash, ptrashrecords.com / FDH, fdhrecords.bandcamp.com)

#### DISJOY: *Red Sky*: 12"

This Welsh trio offers up six tracks of dark and spacious post-punk that rolls along at a steady, unhurried

pace. Much of what I like about this is the fact that the sound seems to expand and circulate so easily rather than being compressed into something constricted and unable to meet its potential. The rhythm section provides the groove whilst the guitar slices away with a discordant anger and layers of feedback. Good stuff. —Rich Cocksedge (Richter Scale, richterscalerecords.limitedrun.com)

#### DISMALFUCKER / HIGH: *Split*: LP


This split features two German bands both dancing to the d-beat of the same drum. Dismalfucker does so in more of a thrashy crust vein whereas HIGH cranks out four high velocity Motörhead style tracks which include some '70s throwback guitar solos. There's a lot of common ground going on but enough to distinguish both outfits, especially in the vocals, which finds Dismalfucker going for the high on unintelligible approach against HIGH, where I can work out most of the lyrics. This is exhilarating and fun. —Rich Cocksedge (Spastic Fantastic, spasticfantastic.de)

#### DOPPLEPOPOLIS: *Dopplepopolis*: CDEP

An intriguing five-song debut from this Lafayette, Ind. trio. It features two tracks of out-and-out power pop, another with a slightly harder punk edge to it, and also a pair of '90s indie rock-influenced tunes. It provides for a varied listen and it does seem a bit like I'm listening to more than one band, but somehow the EP

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works well. This is down to the songs themselves being well written and equally well performed. However, the power pop approach finds more favor with me. —Rich Cocksedge (Self-released, gregoryrsimpson@gmail.com, doppelpopopolis.bandcamp.com)

#### FRANKIADIOS: Self-titled: LP

Mix of Dirtnap-styled punk pop and more traditional Spanish punk sounds. They don't rely on hardcore trappings or Marshall-driven oomph here, opting instead to focus on tunes that derive power from memorable hooks and keeping things at a pace that accentuates the beat. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sabotage)

#### ENDORPHINS LOST / OSK: Split: 7"

Endorphins Lost are from Seattle and are doing a sort of throwback powerviolence thing in the Pessimiser/Slap A Ham vein. They aren't really pushing the boundaries of the style but their side is well done with a heavy and slightly gritty recording. Fans of Despise You should be into their chaotic start/stop riffs. OSK are from Canada and sound slightly more modern but still definitely taking cues from the '90s scene, though they incorporate more of the sludgy elements. Their side is the stronger of the two but the bands complement each other. —Ian Wise (Rotten To The Core)

#### EXEQUALS: Symbols: CS

I'm really in love with the tape renaissance in DIY punk right now

and this ExEquals (stylized x=) tape is just one example why. A compilation of remastered songs from 2012-2017, the Symbols cassette has a stapled-in lyrics sheet, great jacket, and is held together with little Velcro knobs that were for sure put on painstakingly one-by-one. Just like the songs on here, it's pure old school punk aesthetic and practice. It's surprising to me that this is a compilation of songs from across a five-year period, because the songs are really related. They aren't the same thing over and over, but they're all in that same super classic vein. Political disillusion combined with general disregard, most of the songs are under two minutes of straightforward riffs being played as fast as they can. Pure '80s style punk after it crossed the pond. If you gave this tape to a thirteen year old, it would probably help them do some damage. —Theresa W. (Self-released)

#### FIFTEEN:

**The Choice of a New Generation: LP**  
I've never heard of this band, however when I opened up my Razorcake package my partner immediately said, "WHOA Fifteen!" So I thought it would be amusing to interview him for my review. Here's what Matt R. has to say about Fifteen: "I used to see them a lot in Petaluma (Calif.) at the Phoenix Theatre. They were one of the main bands of the era with Nuisance and Green Day. Twerps (my partner's twee pop punk band circa early '90s) played a couple shows with them,

you know, when there were like eight opening bands. The singer/guitarist was in Crimpshrine. I had this record when I was fifteen and then I had the great record purge of '93 and gave it away. Most records from that record purge I have since re-bought over the decades... but not this one." This is a re-release on Dead Broke Records. —Camylle Reynolds (Dead Broke)

#### FLASH HOUSE: Brown Sauce: CD

This is full-on punk'n'roll. There's a Sasquatch on the cover of the CD that brings heavy riffs and heavy bong hits to mind. Their Facebook says, "fast songs played by slow minds." I couldn't say it better myself. Fast, loud, punk rock for the thirsty, sweating, drunken masses. —Ryan Nichols (Gods Candy, godscandyrecords@gmail.com)

#### FLYTRAPS, THE: All Talk: 7"

Ratty garage punk that's long on attitude and hooks. The production is much better than the usual "Budget Rock" fare glutting the genre anymore—you can actually hear what's going on while none of the rawness is sacrificed. —Jimmy Alvarado (Outro)

#### FORD MADDOX FORD:

##### This American Blues: LP

Ford Maddox Ford is the current project from California punk legend Chip Kinman of The Dils and Rank And File. If anything, this project falls somewhere between those two sonic endeavors. It's most certainly not

scrappy, youthful, incendiary punk and it's not stripped-down country either. It sounds like Chip spent twenty years listening to CCR and the Velvet Underground, then his son burned him a CD-R of Spiritualized's *Ladies and Gentlemen We Are Floating in Space*, and all the pieces fell into place. I've never used the phrase "blues rock" in a complimentary way, but I think this situation calls for such an action. Chip, thanks for writing a rock record that isn't afraid to get a little weird. —Daryl (Porterhouse, porterhouserecords.com)

#### FUCK! (IT'S PROBABLY SHIT!): (It's Pronounced The First Three EPs): LP

The three FUCK! 7"s combined for easy access on a one-sided white vinyl 12". Song titles are the interesting humorous hook, but the catchy, however brief, riffs are the finisher. A+ for each 7" end track replacing words in Against Me! titles with "wank." (i.e. "Wank Florida Wank.") Minute-long pop thrashers dealing with mental health, personal worth, and self deprecation. But FUN (pronounced with a "CK"). —Matt Seward (Brassneck)

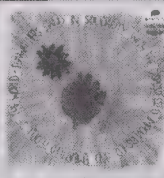
#### FUR COATS, THE: Fur coats: CDEP

Seeing that I am a bit of a fan of The Fur Coats' brand of quirky pop punk, any new release from the band is likely to grab my attention and this new EP is no different. Having given it time to settle into my head, I was surprised to find myself thinking that some of the tracks contained both

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edge and drive which reminded me very much of The Blue Meanies. It's not something I'd noticed before and it certainly does seem to be a new trait, and a favourable one at that. Either way, this is as good as I'd want music by The Fur Coats to be. —Rich Cocksedge (Johann's Face, johannsfacerecords.bigcartel.com)

#### GENERALS: *Chaotic Life: 7" EP*

First track sounds a wee bit like Septic Death with the breakneck speed geared down. The rest are of varying tempos and evince a bit more of a Mystic Records influence. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kämäset Levyt, kamaset.com)

#### GIN GOBLINS: *What Lies Beyond: CD*

Posthumous CD from this Scotland band. Apparently they have been around since the early '90s. They called it a day as of 2013. This album is now finally seeing the light of day. Produced by Rat Scabies, the sonic overtones are well balanced. There's straight ahead punk here, but also a more goth side too. I wish I had heard of this band before. But you can make up for lost time and give this one a listen. Worth the effort. —Sean Koepenick (Self-released, gingoblin@easynet.co.uk)

#### GINO AND THE GOONS: *Rip It Up!: LP*

I was already a big fan of Gino And The Goons, having previously reviewed one of their older records in these pages. But, hot damn, this

new LP hits the near fucking perfect mark for me with its DIY '90s garage rock worship—catchy yet snotty, fitting perfectly amongst the big name "budget rock" titles of yesteryear. This is everything I want in a garage rock record in 2018. Listening to this is like having a full LP of only the Jon Von penned Rip Offs songs—raw as fuck but catchy enough to get stuck in your head an hour later. There's no doubting their adoration of raw rock'n'roll. The super limited first fifty copies of this record came with actual dirt from Bo Diddley's gravesite, ferchrissakes! This is an early contender for my favorite record of 2018—it's that good. If you like your garage punk sounding like it's straight out of the best releases from 1994, then this absolutely must be in your collection. —Mark Twistworthy (Sunwray)

#### GIVING UP: *Garner Cardinals: LP*

Giving Up comes out of the gate strong by including a thirty-two page color zine with lyrics, pictures of the band, and complete liner notes. Some of their songs do this kind of free form jazzy thing, not unlike what Minutemen did, but slightly less frantic and more stream-of-consciousness. Their lyrics are anthems that flicker vignettes, each of which could easily be made into a short film or story. In "Rain," the narrators cover things like the mayor covering up their graffiti, getting kicked out of their house, and missing a call from their mom saying a family dog died. It's on the level that Bobbie

Gentry's "Ode to Billy Joe" is on. Musically, they're all over the place. Some mid-tempo songs, some fast, and all with male and female vocals over piercing guitars and keys. One of my favorite lines is in the song "Page 2" about casual relationships: "I don't want you to want to meet my parents." It's like what Jim Morrison was trying to do if the Doors were good. This shit is super weird, bordering on avant garde, and I'm into it. —Kayla Greet (Sophomore Lounge)

#### GLASS TRAPS: *Self-titled: LP*

This record hooked me in right away with its playful tunes, catchy melodies, and mid-tempo punk charm. The production on here is really sharp and if you're a post-punk fan like me, this record carries all the best qualities of the genre. Fans of newer bands such as Moaning, Boys, or Corners will really enjoy this record. —Ryan Nichols (Self-released, no address listed)

#### #GOALS: *Self-titled: CD*

Three-forths of a Circle Jerks lineup—Greg, Earl, and Lucky—put together a new "project" with a different singer so's Greg can show the swell sound of his recording studio. Things do sound quite good, but the resulting songs—largely a rock feel with a bit o' punk thrown in and largely innocuous lyrical matter—are at best okay and at worst kinda pointless in the way that one would expect from a band put together for the purpose stated. Call it bias or unreasonably

high expectations, but considering the firepower responsible for the proceedings, one can easily, and rightly, expect a bit more than "okay" songs. —Jimmy Alvarado (DC Jam, dcjamrecords.com)

#### GOOD SIGN: *Demo: CS*


Solid, driving indie pop is on feature from this Portland, Ore. group. Band features members from Peeple Watchin', Alien Boy, and In Flux. I would imagine there are some Sarah Records and K Records albums in their collective record collections, given the sound on display here. Kind of a later era All Girl Summer Fun Band feel as well, keeping with the Portland vibe—and even a bit of a Go Sailor feel in spots. Good solid demo and I would be curious to hear more. —Mike Frame (Reflective Tapes, reflectivetapes.bandcamp.com)

#### GOON MAT AND LORD BERNARDO: *THE: Take off Your Clothes: CD*

It would likely surprise no one who is familiar with the label Voodoo Rhythm that this is stomping garage punk blues stuff with distorted vocals. It's nothing that I would reach past a Lightning Beat Man or Possessed By Paul James record to put on, but a solid release for fans of the style/label. —Mike Frame (Voodoo Rhythm)

#### GREAT PLAINS: *Born in a Barn: LP*

The only review needed for this release of Great Plains' remarkable debut album appears on the sticker



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affixed to the front cover, a quote from Will McRobb—co-creator of *The Adventures of Pete & Pete*—that reads: “Great Plains is a spazzoid cry from the wilderness that was my inspiration for everything *Pete & Pete* had to be.” I’ll also add: They’re an underrated example of the agitated weirdo pastoralism, the farmland afternoon boredom turned into art that became a side effect of the endless American Midwest of the 1980s. It’s a strain of nervous punk psychedelia that showed up in The Feelies and The Soft Boys, among others, but in this case it’s from Ohio, where all the good records come from. It’s a rarity to hear someone write and sing about Rutherford B. Hayes, the pains and highs of love, baseball fields, and local newspapers with so much post-adolescent brilliance and humor and subtlety. “Lincoln Logs” and “Serpent Mound” will make it onto your next mixtape, if you’re smart. This is one of those missing-link records we didn’t know was missing. —Matt Werts (Rerun, rerunrecordsstl.com)

#### GREAT PLAINS:

**The Mark, Don & Neil E.P. +4: LP**

There’s a giddy feeling one gets when reviewing a record that makes one do some homework. The 1983 first release (plus live tracks) of Columbus, Ohio’s Great Plains—the release nor the band—has never crossed my radar and I like to think I’ve thrown my musical net far and wide. Points of reference include a

keyboard that sounds like a meth’d out farfisa organ looping in and out of R.E.M.’s first album (if R.E.M. had taken a left turn into weirdo punk). There are hints of the Shadowy Men guitar tone and a touch of Joe Jack Talcum delivery style. But while all of this might simply sound like bolstered nostalgia, Great Plains stood solidly on their own ground, as artists, musicians, and weirdos. Honestly, can not recommend this release enough. Listen up, you will thank me. —Matt Seward (Rerun, rerunrecordsstl.com)

#### GUESTS, THE: Red Scare: LP

Interesting mix of Joy Division-esque gloomy post-punk, new wave, and ‘80s jangle pop. Songs at times recall Human Sexual Response’s more accessible moments. Not bad. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sabotage)

#### HAG: Self-titled: 7”

It seems that the Swedes are always intent on laying waste to all that comes before them and this time it’s in the form of Hag, a band devoid of subtlety and nuance. The melee created is highly energetic and overflows with an aggressiveness that at times reminds me of Black Flag. Highly recommended. —Rich Cocksedge (Imminent Destruction, imminent-destruction@hotmail.co.uk, imminentdestruction.blogspot.co.uk / De:Nihil, info@denihilrecords.com, denihilrecords.bigcartel.com)

#### HAT MADDER, THE: NOTHING ON THE 3 VIN3: CD

You know, maybe it’s the Lansing thing, but while The Hat Madder doesn’t sound like Cheap Girls, they don’t *not* sound like Cheap Girls, you know? They’re probably going to hate the obvious comment here, but it had to be made, so there you have it. The tunes on this here disc are much more layered, experimental, and original (while still being catchy) than the aforementioned Michigan band. Yet, I still don’t know where to ultimately slot them. It’s indie punk with an experimental edge that, at times, sounds so slick that it could be on the radio. Oh, and it was almost impossible to figure out who the band or song titles were at all from the fonts on the cover. —Steve Adamyk (GTG)

#### HAXXAN: Self-titled: CD

New, German surf punk that falls somewhere between the Stitches and the Soft Pack. They have that surf, punk jangle to most of their songs, but instead of having a traditional punk structure, they add in a lot of spastic jams and guitar solos. This is a fun record for the punk fan with a longer attention span and a curiosity for new, foreign music (unless you’re from Germany). —Ryan Nichols (Slovenly)

#### HELTER SKELTER: I Need You: 7”

Jesse Hector’s band Crushed Butler has been reissued several times and has become a proto-punk classic. His next project Helter Skelter didn’t last

as long, but the band produced the glam classic “I Need You.” The song claps and stomps with emerging ‘71 glam enthusiasm. The Marc Boland-inspired vocals and hi-heeled strut walkabout jump beat is a high standard for the genre. “Goodbye Baby” has a similar stomp. The original mono single’s release was delayed and mostly forgotten, but has recently been reproduced by Just Add Water with the previously unreleased Kinks-esque strummer “I Live in Style in Maida Vale” included. It’s a no-brainer if you’re into Killed by Glam-era singles. —Billups Allen (Just Add Water)

#### HORROR SQUAD: Death Posi: LP

Some of the folks who ran the legendary, sadly defunct venue VLHS are in Horror Squad, an absolutely fantastic pop punk band with a lead singer that has a truly distinct voice, kind of reminiscent of Jeff Ott’s, but with a bent all its own. Either he is able to sing a bunch of different styles, or some of the songs feature lead vocals from the peeps who sing backing vocals on the rest of the tracks. Either way, the vocals are at times harsh, at times light, but at all times awesome. Easily one of 2018’s best records so far, so don’t snooze on it. VLHS might be gone, but Horror Squad lives on! —Art Ettinger (Black Cats Record Klub, thehorrorsquad.bandcamp.com)

#### HOT SNAKES: Jericho Sirens: CD/LP

The latest noise from Hot Snakes is their first since 2004’s *Audit in*

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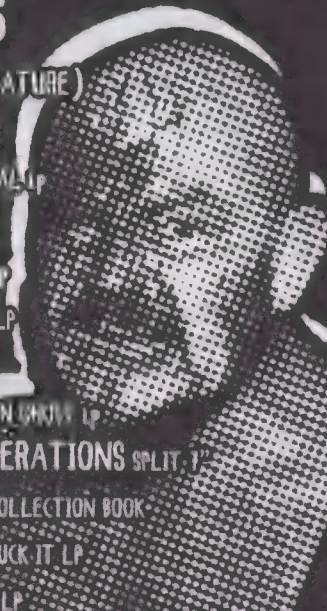
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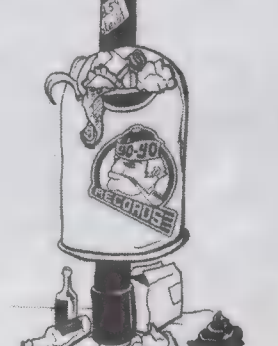
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*Progress.* It's ten songs in thirty minutes which seems appropriate for many bands but for Hot Snakes' return seems a bit short. As is typical for the band, the lyrics make little to no sense but are catchy as hell. (I found myself singing the phrase "Death Doula" on a regular basis after listening to this album.) Stylistically, the band picks up where they left off, as though no time had passed. Some tracks have a great groove ("Six Wave Hold-Down") others have killer riffs ("Death of a Sportsman"), and there are yet others with a progressive, marching beat ("Death Camp Fantasy"). Those critical of Hot Snakes (show yourself!) may fault the band for not re-inventing themselves after not releasing a new album for over a decade, but Hot Snakes always leaves me with such a good feeling and their music is so catchy that I have no problems with their status quo. —Kurt Morris (Sub Pop)

#### HOT SNAKES: *Jericho Sirens*: CD/LP

There is a debate that Hot Snakes were one of the most consistently original bands of the early '00s. It was a formula destined for greatness. Three untouchable albums, and then they seemed to dissipate like some kind of fever dream. I'm not sure I would have believed they even existed if the songs hadn't been stuck in my head and heart for the last decade and a half. Then word came that tours were forthcoming, followed by a record. Could they possibly achieve the levels

of intensity and near religious fervor that they were known for? The short answer is yes. *Jericho Sirens* not only takes top spot on my albums of the year list (or at least tied with Mind Spiders), but I have a sneaking suspicion that it may be the best Hot Snakes album. From the opening blasts of "I Need a Doctor" through the throbbing pulse of the title track. From that unmistakable off-kilter beat in "Death Camp Fantasy" to the sheer power of the album's closing track "Death of a Sportsman," Hot Snakes show us there is still art in guitar rock. This album gives me the chills so hard it makes my eyes water up when I am listening to it. That's right, this album is so good it made me fucking cry. Take that as you will. —Ty Stranglehold (Sub Pop)

#### HOT TIP: *Demo 2017*: CS

I've mostly thought of Hot Tip as a "No Wave if it was invented in Washington, DC" band. They've been shouty and gnarled and had a kind of darker, murky melodic sense (I'm not going to use the word "angular"), especially in the guitars. But this new demo is dreamlike and poetic and textural in new ways, and I feel like even though I've repped them and loved them for a while, I underestimated them. The fade-in opener of "Break," the decomposition at the end of "Give," the new-surf guitar in "Caves," I could go on and on. I always think they're at the height of their conceptual punk powers, but

this time they really are, until their next release. —Matt Werts (Drug Party, drugpartytapes.com)

**HULLMEN, THE: *Hearts of Stone*: CDEP**  
Ugh. Dull, sometimes derivative rock'n'roll. I can see potential on the part of the Hullmen, but the record is done in by overly off-key delivery of the vocals and a generally sluggish performance overall. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Self-released)

#### I SAID GOODBYE: *Fairweather*: LP

Oh, I don't know. It's that sort of melodic indie/punk stuff with super discernable vocals and lines like, "the sun sets on the day that took you away," and, dang, there's just anger or vim to it. English dudes that remind me somewhat of Smith Street Band, who are Australian, so go figure. I mean, it's not like anger is a requisite, per se, but sheesh. Gimme something besides pure saccharine, you know? Certainly, *Fairweather* is wholly competent and accomplished and they make it all pretty effortless, though it's hard to pull that off. And it's well produced and with gorgeous colored vinyl to boot. But I'll be damned if this album isn't just a little too toothless and watered down to stick in the memory banks. —Keith Rosson (Little Rocket)

#### IES: *Self-titled*: 7" EP

Smart aleck artsy punk. They pull from a lot of different sounds—obnoxious garage music, brooding

the next, then off to something that sounds like Le Shok attempting Crass attempting pop—yet the four tunes here retain a cohesiveness that makes the whole focused and fun. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sorry State)

#### ITCHY-O: *From the Overflowing*: CD

I am a fan of extremely weird shit and this is really out there. A fifty-plus member, percussion-based electronic band with masks and dancing and something called the "Creep Unit." Imagine yourself at a parade. In between all of the elaborate floats and Shriners in their tiny uniforms is a marching band. At first this is a very familiar feeling, but then you realize that the marching band is only playing Butthole Surfers songs. Then the Creep Unit appears, darting in and out of the marching band, throwing ecstasy pills and tabs of acid out to the unsuspecting crowd instead of candy. The throbbing relentlessness of it all takes hold around the same time as the drugs... Needless to say, this isn't a regular listening experience. In fact, I feel that I may be downright scared to see Itchy-O live. I'm sweating. —Ty Stranglehold (Alternative Tentacles)

#### JACKSON POLITICK: *Paste V.1*: LP

Jackson Politick is one of many side/solo projects of "Andy Human" of Andy Human & The Reptoids, and if you're familiar with that band or any of the various other related projects, you might have an idea of what's in store here. To the unfamiliar, at times

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this reminds me of the lo-fi garage rock-ish sounds of something like Tyvek with a weird mix of minimalist punk, Devo, Pere Ubu, and other "outsider" type bands. It's really quite varied, and good. Recommended. —Mark Twistworthy (Neck Chop, neck-chop-records.myshopify.com)

**KURJAM: *Surm Tappis Ära*: CD**

Estonian punk with bits of quirky rock thrown in, which makes for some pretty diverse sounds bouncing around. Can't say it consistently blew my dress up but their attempts to work outside the usual boxes are most appreciated. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kurjam, facebook.com/kurjamband)

**LA TUYA: Self-titled: CD**

La Tuya offer ten jolts of (mostly) sociopolitical DIY punk and hardcore on this self-released CD. There are short, raging hardcore songs and pissed-off traditional uptempo punk songs, with an occasional melody-infused melodic punk jammer mixed in. Being punks from Los Angeles is large part of their identity, and it shows in their sound. While there are definitely some songs that I like more than others on here, this whole release gives the most unpretentious vibe, instead seeming heartfelt, sincere, and real. —Mark Twistworthy (Self-released, facebook.com/latuyaeastlos)

**LA VARE: Self-titled: LP**

Potent potpourri of Modern Action-style retro punk and more darker,

artsier influences creeping in at the edges—is that some PiL lurking in that back during "Tapis"? Having a bit of trouble pinning down where they're from—lyrics are in French but they seem to play Leipzig a lot—but that don't much matter. What does is they tear into the tunes here with gleeful abandon and that this album is fuggin' great. —Jimmy Alvarado (Phantom, phantom.tk)

**LIONS SHARE: Demo: EP**

Briggsy from Warthog Speak hipped me to this lot long before he got it down on vinyl. From the middle of fucking nowhere Canada, this lot filter classic old U.K. early-'80s oi/punk like the Rejects and Blitz through some early New York thuggery. I honestly believe that bands from nowhere have more originality 'cos they aren't affected by their peers. This lot isn't rewriting any scripts here, but they sure as fuck have the thug punk vibe locked the fuck down. Fans of Rixe, Fatigue, and Fuerza Bruta get on this ASAP. —Tim Brooks (Warthog Speak, warthogspeak.com)

**LONG GONE: *Seven Songs*: CS**

This tape came with a note on it that says Long Gone is "country band from Boston, MA" and that means something very specific. I don't disagree with them, but anyone from Boston knows that what people think of is country there is probably different than what other people might think of as country. This is

more J Mascis than Hank Williams, with twangy vocals over driving tracks that are a little more grungy and sad than the more melodic punk stuff that it might otherwise evoke. It's like Neil Young having Samiam as his backing band. And I fucking love both, so this tape is something else. I've come to expect nothing less from the excellent Reflective Tapes out of Olympia, Wash. and this kind of cross-continental support is what makes me still love DIY. —Theresa W. (Reflective Tapes, reflectivetapes.bandcamp.com)

**MURKIN: *A Harvest of Ice*: CS**

Murky, droning, mostly instrumental Madison post-punk that sounds like the soundtrack to, like, ice fairies getting lobotomized or something. It's chilling, forlorn, ambient stuff that sounds exactly like it is—a mostly-solo noise project recorded in the depths of Wisconsin winter. The instrumentals work better than the vocalized stuff, but all in all, it's pretty atmospheric throughout. —Keith Rosson (Rare Plant)

**MARC WITH A C: *Obscurity*: CD**

Marc With a C is a polished one-man singer-songwriter act of really poppy rock'n'roll to the point that it borders on more pop than rock, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. The songs are catchy as hell, and while they sound rather sugary on the surface, there's some jaded, snotty sentiments lurking in the lyrical content, especially when

Marc warbles about the hazards of modern social media. All in all, the record is kind of like biting into a lemon doused in sugar; it's one of those records that I don't think I like, but then I catch myself singing the songs as I travel from room to room in my house. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Self-released, marcwithac.bandcamp.com)

**MARC WITH A C: *Obscurity*: CD**

This basically sounds like open mic night distilled into compact disc form. It's not quite goofy enough to pass as a full-on joke band, but it definitely seems like this guy's songwriting identity revolves around disguising awkward humor as edgy social commentary. I'm cringing at so many of these lines—real winners include "I'll check my privilege at the door so you don't get too upset," "I'm a genderfluid otherkin just like my parents," and "[Harry Potter] had as much impact on me as other things that don't exist, like Jesus Christ." Plus whatever the hell he's trying to say in "The New Normal" about a lady who calls the cops "on a silly whim" that ends up in a domestic violence charge. Yikes. Marc also seems to be really, really anxious about technology, in that special way of people who believe that being tech-literate and appreciating what's real in life are mutually exclusive. Kinda sounds like indie rock Weird Al, to tell you the truth, but without the actual jokes. —Indiana Laub (Self-released, marcwithac.bandcamp.com)

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**MARK WITH A C: Obscurity: LP**

This record is filled with light indie rock-styled pop songs with a nerdy feel. I wouldn't be surprised to go into my local indie coffee shop and see this guy banging these songs out on an acoustic guitar in the corner while nobody pays any attention. It's proficient enough, but it ultimately is too far outside of anything that I can relate to. —Mark Twistworthy (Self-released, marcwithac.bandcamp.com)

**MARRIAGE MATERIAL: Making the World Work II - Part 1: 7"**

Damn it, I thought they really were three brothers! Anyway, here's five songs of fuzzy, rough-hewn punk stuff with melodies buried deep down there beneath the grit, bright guitar leads flashing out here and there. Structure veers and leans but holds solid, particularly in the gravelly pop of "Someone Else" and the surprising jam of the record, the near power pop blister of a live song, "Seasons." That one surprised the hell out of me with its swagger. Nice vinyl debut from a band that hopefully sticks around for a while, and I dig the "forget a record cover, let's make the center label the art piece" aesthetic. —Keith Rosson (Dirt Cult)

**METAYOUTH: Self-titled: CD**

Fuzzy, noisy bedroom pop that draws a lot from '90s indie and pop punk bands as it does from experimental post-rock. The handful of extended instrumental parts sprinkled throughout

the album build into triumphant wall-of-sound swells, dreamy as anything, but then how about those Blink-182 "na na na"s? There are probably some synths buried in here, or maybe the guitars are just that fucked up and fuzzed out. Who can say for sure? The straight-up poppy jams are similar in vibe to early Cloud Nothings, but more bummed out and blurry—it definitely works for them. I wanna hear "Pool" at the emotional crescendo of a lo-fi short film, probably with a kid riding a bike on the outskirts of a suburban neighborhood, or something to that effect. —Indiana Laub (Self-released, metayouth.bandcamp.com)

**MIDNITE SNAXX: "Greedy Little Thing" b/w "Turf War": 7"**

Midnite Snaxxx continue to crank out solid rockers with bubble gum-inspired choruses and power pop sensibilities moving at the speed of Ramones. "Turf War" has a great call and response chorus with brash, don't-care-about-school-vocals and excellent punk'n'roll guitar breaks. They remain solid. —Billups Allen (Goodbye Boozzy)

**NARCOLEPTICS: JOTH: EP**

This band are fucking mental. Under the radar mayhem from NYC by way of Chicago. Harsh wall of noise, like Anti Cimex on meth. Brutal and fast, but what really makes this band is the drummer who is like Mick Harris from Napalm Death or Brian Betzger from Jerry's Kids on 78 rpm. I have no idea

why every fucker isn't crowing about this lot. Devastating. —Tim Brooks (Warthog Speak, warthogspeak.com)

**NEGATIVE VIBES: Self-titled: EP**

Negative Vibes do an excellent job of blending early '80s Boston hardcore with late '80s NYHC. Think of DYS crossed with the first Sick Of It All EP. Thundering drums, growling vocals, razor sharp distortion on the guitar, and that bass with a really nice low end to keep it all on a solid foundation. The songs are rife with energy and high tension, tightly played, and the vocals come across clear and with conviction. Six songs and not one stinker among them. I'm hoping there's more to come from these folks. —Matt Average (N.I.C., nic.ayz.pl)

**NEON BONE / GRIM DEEDS: Split: 7"**

Seriously DIY pop punk. I love it when totally unknown bands just happen to write a killer song. Of course, maybe they have discographies of albums, filled with great songs, self-released on CD and never heard by 99.9 percent of the punk world (and maybe they have black metal alter egos). In any case, you just never know when a great song will cross your path. This split 7" has two bands you've never heard of, with two songs each. Neon Bone's first entry is "I Remember." I wonder if they know about the Ramones' "I Remember You" and Chixdiggit!'s "I Remember You," both absolutely perfect pop punk songs. If they did, then this is a ballsy move that I love,

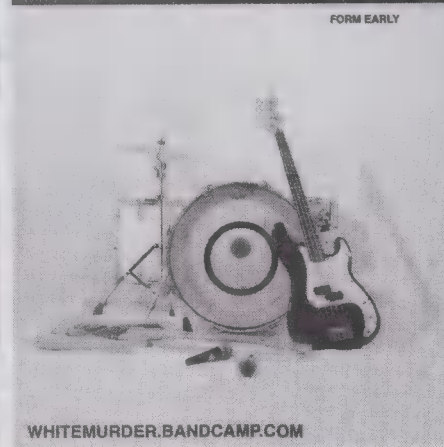
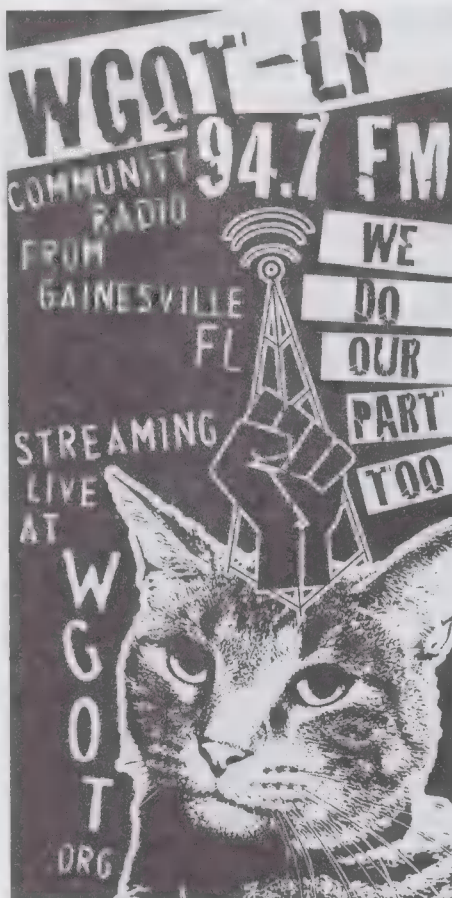
because this is a great song! If they didn't know, then where the hell have these (presumably) Germans been?! Grim Deeds' "Punk Rock Therapy" has a Lillingtons-style lead and kills it in the lyrics and drum machine departments. Like Deeds' other song on this split clearly spells out he's a one-man-band (more or less) and epitomizes what's great about DIY punk. Write a great song, record it, and see if you can get someone to listen. —Chad Williams (Mom's Basement, momsbasementrecords.bandcamp.com)

**NIDSTANG: Self-titled: CD**

Black metal garage rock. Really heavy, really brutal. Kind of blurs together for me, but it's good. I think on paper this is a winning genre combo, but I think I need the production to be just a smidge cleaner to really find myself attached to this music. For a one-man band, it's pretty impressive. I can't knock this any points for content, only for personal taste. —Bryan Static (Self-released, nidstang.bandcamp.com)

**NO END IN SIGHT:****Faded Memories: CD**

No End In Sight is a Québécois punk band active since 2014. Its work ranges from pop punk to skate punk, and has been fleshed out between a small handful of albums and EPs. *Faded Memories* was released in late 2017. The vocals are nasally and obnoxious and their delivery, persisting throughout the album, bothered me



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endlessly. Some of the instrumentation in songs such as "Lobotomy" is explosive and impressive, but the guitar work throughout most of the album is monotonous and derivative. The drumming in this release is genuinely skilled and appropriate, but it only serves to highlight how dull and tedious the guitar is. This album is generally uninteresting and occasionally cringe-worthy. Diehard pop punk fans may enjoy it, but, generally, this record is not worth spending one's time on. —Anna Farr (Morningwood)

#### NO PULSE: Demo: 7"

When I first heard this I have to admit that I thought No Pulse were from Scandinavia, seeing how intense and in your face it sounded. In fact, No Pulse hails from Bristol, a mere one hundred twenty miles up the road from where I live in the U.K. This is a demo which has fortunately made it onto vinyl and all four tracks totally rip. I ordered this after hearing it through just the once on the internet as it was a total no brainer purchase. Given No Pulse's geographic proximity to me this also means that I should get to see them live relatively easily too. Result! —Rich Cocksedge (Urinal Vinyl, [urinalvinyl@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:urinalvinyl@yahoo.co.uk), [urinalvinyl.com](http://urinalvinyl.com))

#### NOMOS 751: Self-titled: LP

Greek punk George Fotopoulos, of Komodina 3, is the mastermind behind NOMOS 751. With the assistance of

fellow misfits, Fotopoulos performs seventeen songs of hypnotic, spaced-out synth punk that's dripping with a glob of The Spits. It's wacked-out, inventive, hypnotically sung in Greek and, honestly, pretty tedious. Let's just say that NOMOS 751 is better in small doses. Listening to this LP back-to-back a few times made my brain mushy. But that was probably Fotopoulos' plan all along. —Sean Arenas (Slovenly, [slovenly.com](http://slovenly.com))

#### NORMALS, THE:

##### ~~Demotape~~ Breakdown: 7" EP

Just when you think the spigot just has to have run dry by now, Almost Ready (a label named after one of the band's signature tunes) pulls three more Normals tracks out of the ether—or, in this case, from a 1978 demo. The title track is a dark, slinky bit o' punkin', while the other two tracks go the less nuanced, more direct stomp-'em-dead approach. A nice addition to this legendary New Orleans punk band's legacy, and good listening for discerning musical gourmands to be found here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Almost Ready)

#### NOVELISTME: Fine Listener: CD

Novelistme is a British band whose twelve-song album is reminiscent of early 2000s Radiohead. However, *Fine Listener* has more keyboard blips and bleeps and groove than anything from Thom Yorke and company. One of the reasons for such a comparison is that the vocalist for Novelistme bears

■ striking resemblance to Yorke. Yet, with their frequent hypnotic rhythms, Novelistme seems more meant for ■ dance club than ■ stadium. This is all to say that it's good, but not great. When it comes down to it, I'll take my Radiohead albums over bands that come close to sounding like them. —Kurt Morris (novelistme, [bandcamp.com](http://bandcamp.com))

#### NOX NOVACULA: Self-titled: CD

This is the best goth record I've heard in a long time. With strong female vocals, this has all the right ingredients and avoids the often cheesy campiness that goth bands can have. Rozz Williams would be proud of this one. —Ryan Nichols (Casino Trash, [casinotrashrecords@gmail.com](mailto:casinotrashrecords@gmail.com))

#### NUMBER ONES:

##### Another Side of the Number Ones: EP

In the tradition of bands like the Exploding Hearts, Tranzmitors, and the Briefs who have studied the past and made it the present, this lot from Dublin have taken their own history and made it their own. Faultless late-'70s Irish punk in vein of the Blades, Rudi, Victim, Outcasts or any number of long-forgotten Irish and Northern Irish gems. Any of these tracks could have been lifted from any Good Vibrations release or appeared on *Bloodstains Across Northern Ireland*. If I had any complaint it would be that it's almost too perfect, if that makes sense. When a master forger is able to

replicate a masterpiece, are they still an artist? Killer either way. —Tim Brooks (Static Shock, [staticshockrecords.limitedrun.com](http://staticshockrecords.limitedrun.com))

#### PALATINES, THE:

##### Death from Below: LP

This is one that will appeal to anyone who liked a lot of what Fat Wreck, Honest Don's, and Epitaph were releasing in the '90s. This takes the background wall of guitar I associate with NUFAN and adds in elements of Teen Idols to create a really punchy and melodic punk sound. It's not reinventing anything but takes a tried and tested approach and uses it to write some really catchy songs. It takes a lot for me to part with hard earned cash and pay stupid international postage rates these days, but this time I was glad to support the postal workers to get hold of a copy of this. An early contender for my annual top ten. —Rich Cocksedge (Self-released, [thepalatines.bandcamp.com](http://thepalatines.bandcamp.com))

#### PANICBURG CITY: Self-titled: 12" EP

This German band cites Hüsker Dü, The Cult, and The Jam as their influences. While the idea of having those three particular bands as your influence isn't something that really makes sense to me, it's weird because I can totally hear each of those bands in Panicburg City's sound. More specifically, I think this band is Hüsker Dü influenced at its core, but sprinkles a little of The Cult and The Jam in here and




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there. I also hear what sounds to me like U2 and Interpol type sounds on a couple of these songs, all with a slight punk sheen over the top. This is definitely worth a listen. —Mark Twistworthy (JanML, janml-records.de)

#### PASTAWAYS

##### Tunes of Terror Vol 1: CD

Pastaways is a Chicago punk outfit. Identifying with the Misfits and Ramones, Pastaways certainly evokes the sound of earlier punk records. This short release contains just four songs. The first, "Basket Life," is a fun and energetic track with pounding drums and a rushing vocal delivery. I instantly became excited for what this record had to offer after hearing it. I was disappointed, not because the songs took a turn for a worse, but because they sounded so remarkably alike. The first three songs have beginnings so similar I had to listen to them twice to make sure I was not listening to the opening track on repeat. The sound is playful and the performances are tight, but there is absolutely no variation within this project. Hopefully the band is able to preserve its energy while diversifying its sound in future projects, because there truly is potential here, but the release as a whole is entirely repetitive. This is a nice release, but one that simply doesn't deliver enough. —Anna Farr (Self-released, store.cdbaby.com/cd/pastaways)

#### PATHOGENS, THE: *Friday Night Light*: EP

Cinder Block is back! I loved Tilt and definitely have been on the lookout for female vocalists who could belt it out even half as well as she does. This band is a six piece out of the Bay—two guitars, female and male vocals, drums, and bass. Jesse Luscious from Blatz and Markley Hart from Econochrist round out this lineup too. This is what you call an East Bay supergroup. Cinder and Jesse contribute two songs each lyrically, but both lend out their talents on all four tracks. In the last third of "Better Bother You" there's a biting reference to that moron Trump before jumping back into the lightning quick ear worm of a chorus. Once I saw the pedigree of talent in this band, it was no brainer to pre-order this EP. I've since spun it over and over with no signs of getting sick of it. Fast, catchy East Bay punk in 2018. Fuck. Yeah. First hundred copies are white/pink splatter, and the other four hundred on standard black. Absolutely worth picking up. —Kayla Greet (1986'd)

#### PATRICK CAMPBELL-LYONS

##### "Out on the Road" b/w "1974": 7"

Patrick Campbell-Lyons fronted the '60s psych band Nirvana. Some of Nirvana's excellent material has been reissued recently. This single contains two mellow songs; both bouncy numbers that would be at home near the beginning of a soundtrack of a motorcycle movie. "Out on the Road" has a drone quality and soft vocal

delivery. "1974" is a little jumpier but maintains the pace of more upbeat Velvet Underground songs. A must for U.K. folkies and VU fans. —Billups Allen (Mighty Mouth Music, almostreadyrecords@live.com)

#### PERVERTS AGAIN:

##### Friday Night Light: LP

I lived in Ohio for a while. I bought some of my first records at Van Leunens. I'm not a native, but I lived there long enough to know it's a weird and wonderful place America doesn't appreciate enough. We have documented proof that something in the water there produced great art. All the New York Water Authority can claim is good bagels. The band plays solid punk drudgery with driving guitars, sarcastic cyborg delivery, and strange keyboard squeaking. I'd like to write this whole review and not once mention Devo, but Perverts Again succeed so well at doing what Devo did in creating a world around their weirdness that they should be applauded for it. The mechanical Ohio "cronk" can be reproduced, but to give the delivery meaning in the way *Friday Night Light* does is beyond what the average Devo copycat can manage. *Friday Night Light* is a weird punk world of which you'll want to be a part. —Billups Allen (Total Punk, floridasdying.com)

#### PHAT CARDINALS: *Good Times*: CD

If you are looking for some zany, wacky garage stuff with a touch of surf

that is replacing the word "sexiest" where Deadbolt had "scariest," this will be right up your alley. The sexiest band in the world offers up four songs of fine but unmemorable garage-style songs. —Mike Frame (thephatcardinalsband@gmail.com, facebook.com/thephatcardinals)

#### PISSJAR: *Apathy & Cheap Thrills*: 7"

Pissjar from Stockholm deliver eight fun tracks of quintessentially Swedish hardcore on this new EP. Known for being catchy as hell, Swedish core has its own feel that is easily recognizable. On this record, you get a fine taste of that sound. The lyrics are in English, but the musical stylings are directly influenced by the Swedish hardcore of the past. There are lead guitar lines, but it never borders on metal. Don't let the name fool you. There's nothing apathetic or cheap going on here. Highly recommended. —Art Ettinger (Religious Vomit, religiousvomit.bandcamp.com)

#### PISSWATER PREACHERS:

##### Homebacked Mithback Magick: CD

Pisswater Preachers are a no-wave rock group from Cincinnati that released its debut album late last year. The rambling, folksy harmonica and vocals in "Pensacola Stomp" are eventually overshadowed by a series of noise effects, laying the foundation for the tone of the album. "Schizophrenic Love Affair" takes these bizarre vocals to its most disorienting, while tracks like "Bad Trip" stress the punk



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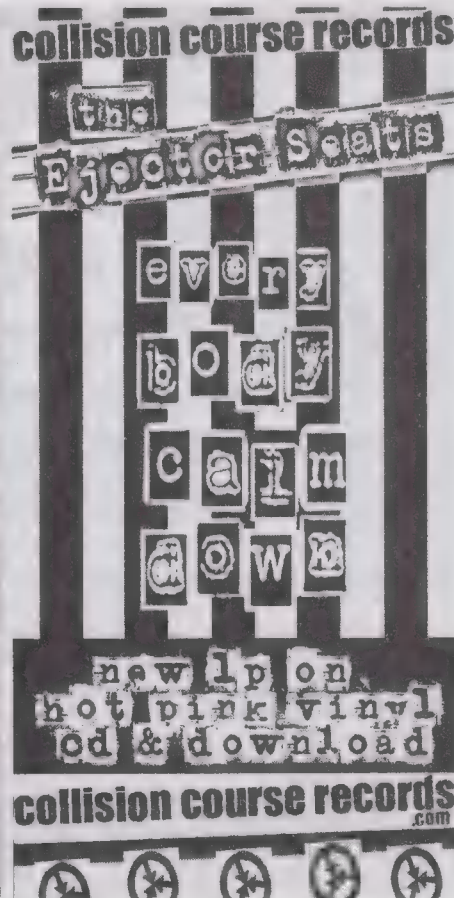
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side of its sound. The record's closing tracks, "Meth Whore" and "Fuck ■ Scientist," are the record's least vocal, most jazz- and free-form-influenced tracks. Generally, this album delivers what the title implies—grubby and disorienting songs soaked in a sort of southern sound. The vocals are off-putting, and the instrumentation is dissonant. The lyrics were obscured to the point of total incoherence most of the time, solely expressing the primal lunacy of the singer. Though self-indulgent at times, the project comes together into a rowdy and entertaining listen for those interested in something offbeat and noisy. I enjoyed it, but it certainly isn't for everyone —Anna Farr (Octomatic Metamorph)

**PIZZASAURUS REX: *Travelling Today on Yesterday's Maps*: CS**

I never had the pleasure to cross paths with Barker Gee, but his loss was felt hard by an awful lot of people I care about—and by all accounts, he was ■ righteous dude. He was also in this here band Pizzasaurus Rex, whom I believed would be a jokey type of band based on the name. It's not. The music here is beautiful and heartfelt. They manage to find that sweet spot between The Doughboys and Tiltwheel and call it their own. Or is it between Dinosaur Jr and Tenement? Or all of the above? These songs were recorded in 2006, but this cassette has been released now as a benefit to raise money for the Barker Gee Scholarship Fund so head on over to the Bandcamp

site and pick it up. —Ty Stranglehold (Pizzasaurus Rex, pizzasaurusrex.bandcamp.com)

**PLEITE: *Im Gang Vor Die Hunde*: ■**

Enjoyable, fierce post-punk-influenced hardcore. Think something along the lines of Pissed Jeans. There's some nice diversity in the feel of the songs: angry, yet thoughtful. The vocals take ■ secondary role in the band, acting ■ texture rather than driving force. The results are loud, blended, and opaque enough to create ■ sense of wonder. I caught myself finding new sounds after each listen of this tape. —Bryan Static (Twisted Chords, twisted-chords.de)

**PLEITE: ■ *Gang Vor Die Hunde*: LP**

A German band verging on the heavier side of post-punk but with ■ touch of melodicism running through the songs. Comparisons to fellow Germans Hammerhead would not be out of place as both outfits display thick, edgy, and angular musical traits. Pleite includes a member of Henry Fonda and also covers "Deutschland du Täter" by that band, giving it a cleaner, less abrasive sound than the original. Another good release from Twisted Chords. —Rich Cocksedge (Twisted Chords, mailorder@twisted-chords.de, twisted-chords.de)

**PREENING: *Self-titled*: 7" EP**

Dissonant, arty, no-wavy punk outta Oakland. The drums/bass/sax instrumental lineup lends a bit of a

jazzbo sheen to their tunes, and it's not too bit of a stretch to imagine them sharing a bill with Club Foot Orchestra and Tuxedomoon back in the Bay Area's so-called "glory days." Great EP here that takes off ■ ■ good side road from the norm. —Jimmy Alvarado (Preening, preeningoakland@gmail.com)

**PROTON PACKS: *Conspiracy*: ■ LP**

Conspiracy '66 is ■ concept record with songs titled "This Plan Cannot Fail," "Top-Secret Secret," "Lockheed '71," "Cold War Extravaganza," and the likes, so if you're looking to stew in angst or need a soundtrack to pound your fists of fury, this album ain't the one. However, if you're looking for straightforward power chord pop punk, riffing on a mix of the Ramones and ■ slowed-down Screeching Weasel, this might just do it. —Camylle Reynolds (Mom's Basement)

**RAGING NATHANS: *Cheap Fame*: CD**

I've heard this band's name thrown around a lot but I've never heard them until now. I can sum it up by saying that they play mid-'90s style pop punk really well. Incredibly well. If I heard this twenty-five years ago, I would have considered these guys better than most of the bands that made it big doing the same type of thing. Ah hell, who am I kidding? I am enjoying this right now. I can't say that I would go out of my way to put this album on, but if it came on, I wouldn't go out of my way to turn it off. Now where

the hell did I put my chain wallet? —Ty Stranglehold (Rad Girlfriend, radgirlfriendrecords.storenvy.com)

**RASH DECISION: *Karoshi*: LP/CD**

Rapid-fire drums, punchy basslines, razor sharp guitars, and dual vocalists hit the ground running on "900 Minutes" at the start of really fine album from this Cornish five piece. The band mixes up approaches that take in d-beat, metal, and—on the excellent "The Seagull Has Landed"—a more USHC sound. The use of two discernibly different vocalists is ■ major plus point for me, as it adds ■ touch of variety to proceedings. I'm guessing that Rash Decision is perhaps the first punk band to include a reference to Enya's "Orinoco Flow" in ■ song, as heard in "Medium Raw." This is out on more labels than can be fitted in here, so I'm going with just the one, but you should be able to get hold of this without much trouble. —Rich Cocksedge (Pumpkin, pumpkinrecords.co.uk)

**REAL KIDS, THE: *The Kids* — 1979**

***Demos, The Real Kids* — 1977/78**

***Demos/Live*: CD + Book**

Length restrictions (I think the title alone ate up about half my three hundred word limit) won't permit getting you up to speed on the Real Kids 1978 self-titled debut album; in the unlikely and unfortunate event you are not familiar with this ideal synthesis of punk, power pop, and rock'n'roll, buy it and double back

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here when you're ready. We're gonna start without you. Anyway, I've never ■■■ anything quite like this before— it's ■ 200-page CD booklet, bound like ■ book, plus ■ glued-in CD—a sprawling epic marvel detailing not only the rise and fall of the Real Kids, but also the early Boston scene in general and John Felice's musical career in specific. Musically, what I found most arresting were the eight songs on the church basement demo from 1974, when the band were still hobbling along ■ "The Kids." One generally thinks of the Real Kids ■ a taut, economical unit, but in '74 the Kids were bringing the THUNDER, dude. I never really saw the Real Kids/MC5 connection before, but the Keith Moon-esque, arena-demolishing kit-pounding anchors ■ sound which the band's balls, guts, and heart ■■ to be pushing towards *Kick Out the Jams* territory, while their brain tries to angle it towards *Back in the USA* or maybe the Flamin' Groovies instead. When the scene shifts to '77/'78 and the sound and songs move into familiar focus, one can't help but notice how the drums get relegated to mere time keeping and flourishes and wonder what might have happened had they articulated their '74 vision more fully. We're obviously all going to have to buy this. BEST SONG: *Reggae!!! Reggae!!!* BEST SONG TITLE: *Reggae!!! Reggae!!!* FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: *Reggae!!! Reggae!!!* —Rev. Nørb (Crypt, cryptrecords.com)

#### RECONSTITUTE: ~~new title~~ CS

Oh, shit yes. A response to the election of 45, this tape is fucking brutal and beautiful. It's four driving, political supplications that are biting indictments of a system we all know is fucked up. But because of its witty lyricism and tempo shifts, it manages to move from, "Yeah, no shit to dude," to, "Holy fuck, you're totally right." Lyrics like, "when you have to decide between being well and poor, I'll save the co-pay, dig my own grave" probably won't tell you anything you don't know (or already agree with) but the clever digs at this particular brand of American bullshit ("I've prepared ■ treaty, for which you will sign. It's tweet-length, so I know you can read it") make it enjoyable. And instead of being all driving, all pushed out, all the way, there's some interesting more development stuff as the short tape goes on. I'm pretty blown away by the last song, "Digging for Coal," which I think is a project in trying to explore how a music experience can invoke the same pace and charge of mining. It rules. —Theresa W. (Crass Lips, crasslipsrecords.bandcamp.com)

#### RED DONS: *Genocide: 7"*

These cats have long carved their own niche within the non-Ramones influenced poppier wing of punk. These latest two additions to their oeuvre continue along the same path previously trod—slashing downstroked minor chords over

mid-tempo beats and vocals that know their way around a good melody. Both get the head bobbing easily while the mind marvels at the swell sounds the ears are picking up. Another couple of rockers here and no filler to diminish the effort. —Jimmy Alvarado (Man In Decline, manindecline.limitedrun.com)

#### RED KATE:

##### "Iraqi Girl" b/w "American Zone": 7"

Following Red Kate's recent split 7" with Stiff Middle Fingers, this single keeps the band's momentum moving in the right direction. Both tracks—a new song and a T.S.O.L. cover—are straight-up, punchy punk rock in which the rhythm section really drives them along. "Iraqi Girl" in particular benefits from a heavy bassline and ■ repetitive guitar riff throughout, whilst "American Zone" is treated with enough reverence without it seeming like a pointless copy. There are rumors that this Kansas City outfit might be heading to Germany later in the year for a few shows, ■■ I might have to get my passport out for some travelling to mainland Europe. —Rich Cocksedge (Too Much Rock, toomuchrock.com)

#### REG BLOOR:

##### *Sensory Irritation Chamber: CD*

If Chucky ever takes breaks from killing people, I would imagine he would listen to this album on his day off. —Sean Koeppenick (Self-released, reg@regbloor.com, regbloor.com)

#### RICKY HAMILTON WITH THE

##### VOIDMATE: *Welcome 2 Hell: CS*

Not at all what I expected from the cover art; I assumed this was another harsh noise project with a couple of oscillators plugged into cheap delay pedals, but instead I get some sort of artsy garage in the Flying Nun tradition. This is a weird but refreshing listen, like the Spits doing their take on Dinosaur Jr with some weird-as-fuck instrumentation that somehow never sounds gimmicky. I'll bet these Cleveland weirdos ■■ really into those fucked up Beach Boys albums where Brian Wilson was out of his mind but these guys can still write that hook (and for any interested readers, *Surf's Up* is absolutely the best Beach Boys LP). The chord progressions are simple and the arrangements are pretty to-the-point but there's something about every song on here that makes it a dense gem, worth revisiting. Definitely the best thing I've heard this month. —Ian Wise (Quality Time, qualitytimerecords@gmail.com)

#### RIN AND THE PIGS:


##### *A Bunch of Gals: LP*

Late-'70s Midwestern punk feel with Dictators and maybe a bit of Wayne County's more rambunctious side peppered in for texture from ■ band outta the Pacific Northwest. They know the sound well, and hammer away with abandon, giving already rock-solid riffs even more heft. Drop this into ■ time machine set for ■ few decades back and I can see it



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fetching big money from the collector schmucks who won't pay them the slightest mind right now. Their loss, our gain, fuck 'em. —Jimmy Alvarado (Total Punk, floridasdying.com)

#### RIP ROOM: *Movers: CS*

These self-described "wound-up art punks" from San Francisco mix heavy, Slint-esque post-hardcore with touches of the B-52's campy reverb. The songs are more groovy than twitchy, but the whole thing's shot through with punk nerves. I dig it. —Chris Terry (riproom, bandcamp.com)

#### RIVERSEGE:

##### *New Hope for the Heart CS*

I am not sure how to come at this. There is so much going on with this band, and I think I love it all. First of all, Riversedge are ■ fuzzed-out, snotty punk band where you can hear the sneers dripping through the vocals, but there is heart there, and the songs are so catchy... Oh, did I mention that there is an organ in the mix? The closest I can get to ■ description would be to take an earnest, working class Midwestern band and filter it through Florida via ADD Records. Tough, weird, pleasant, and urgent all at once. I'm sold! —Ty Stranglehold (Lifer Tapes, lifertapes1.bandcamp.com)

#### ROUND EYE: *Manster Vision: CD*

Round Eye's songs are all over the map, to say the least. They refer to themselves as experimental freak

punk, but the tracks aren't that "out there" per se—mostly straightforward timing with quirky vocals. Sometimes cowpunk, other times straight up rock'n'roll stompers. Their mid-tempo numbers seem to come off the best, to me at least. I presumed they'd be Canadian since it's on Sudden Death, but apparently they're from Shanghai. Could've fooled me. I left pleasantly surprised either way. —Steve Adamyk (Sudden Death, suddendeathrecords.com)

#### RULER: *"Tiger"*

##### *b/w "Gimme Some Noise": 7"*

A surprise I wasn't expecting—new band featuring Fink from Teengenerate/Raydios. Fink's name is what got my attention, but the rest of the band deserves mention, ■ pedigree featuring other Japanese garage/punk luminaries (including a Young One and a Rip Off Records alumni). It's not as much the fireball explosion of speed and blown-out sound ■ Teengenerate; maybe more driving and raw than Raydios (who rock in a more Dictators-esque vein). The guitar has plenty of low end without being muddy (think of the crunch of a Gibson SG). So, your mind's eye's ear should have ■ good idea of what to expect. This 7" is limited to two hundred in the U.S. so if you haven't gotten it already, you may have to be satisfied with listening to it on Bandcamp. Ruler is good for what ails me these days and I hope for more, sooner rather than later. —Sal Lucci

(Secret Mission, secretmissionrecords.bandcamp.com / Mangrove)

#### RULER: *"Tiger"*

##### *b/w "Gimme Some Noise": 7"*

In the last few months, my collection of Secret Mission releases has grown steadily with the likes of The Fadeaways, Boys Order, and M.O.T.O. This Ruler 7" is further proof that the label can do no wrong. Boasting members of legendary Japanese punk outfits Teengenerate, Raydios, and The Young Ones, Ruler delivers two furious stripped-down tunes in the vein of Testors. For over two decades, guitarist Fink has been tickling eardrums with his rockin', spastic riffs while the rest of the band—Rayco, Otoy, and Azu—are't slackers either; they effortlessly harness chaos for five head-spinning minutes. At two songs, this 7" is only ■ small sample of Ruler's true power. Let's hope ■ LP is around the corner. —Sean Arenas (Secret Mission, secretmissionrecords.com / Mangrove)

#### SCREAMING FEMALES:

##### *All at Once: 2 x LP*

What would you say the lifespan of an average band is? There has to be an equivalent like dog years, because bands implode all the time after six months, a year, a tour, a single album: "Oh, this band has been together for an EP and ■ tour, so they're like thirty in human years." So it's funny to think about Screaming Females. I've been a slobbering, annoyingly

advocative fan since 2012, when I got *Ugly*. Anyone who's been to my house since then has endured my Screaming Females evangelizing—but by the time I heard about them, they were already something like *seven years in*. I wasn't clued into the first four LPs, f'r chrissake! It's a minor miracle that they're still going, close to twelve hundred shows later. And it's even more miraculous that their new double LP *All at Once* might be the best stuff yet. After so much time together, the Scremales know what works, and what doesn't—and have the uncanny ability to stretch the former beyond listener expectations. I think they're more dynamic than ever, with each member coming to the fore and retreating ■ needed. This isn't to say that things have changed dramatically, because they haven't: Marissa still ululates and shreds, with Jarrett and Mike as the reliable anchors. But after so long, the band is dedicated only to what makes them happy—the reason for their sustainability and, of course, for their utterly inspiring albums and (especially) live shows. The greatest. —Michael T. Fournier (Don Giovanni)

#### SEINE: *Sno Sna: CD*

Seine is ■ Croatian alternative band that has put out a slew of releases since 2014. *Sno Sna* begins with ■ series of melancholic tracks, which reach peak in intensity at "Privatno Tijelo." "Bubamara" fractures the track list with a warmer and happier mood, with countertenor vocals seemingly



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inspired by Tiny Tim. The album fleshes out its downtrodden tone ■ bit more, but finishes on ■ wistfully positive note with "Ljubav." The vocal performances are ■ highlight on this album, where the singing is expressive, but also hushed and tamed. The instrumentation throughout this record is a bit generic, but generally matches the mood of the vocals well. The mood cultivated is touching (if not a bit derivative of past alternative bands), and most fans of quiet indie records could probably enjoy this.

—Anna Farr (Moonlee, moonleerecords.bandcamp.com/album/sno-sna)

#### SETH ANDERSON: Self-titled: LP

The first track, "More Than Killers," quietly sneaks into being and sets ■ mellow tone for the record, though the rest of the songs are much more than just Anderson and his acoustic. There's a soft sweetness to his voice which also carries a bit of gravel and twang. By track two the pacing is kicked up a notch or two and by the third he's incorporated a warm bass to round out the sound. Later in the record we get piano, organ, ■ dobro resonator guitar, and ■ multitude of instruments and harmonies from Joey Cape. The songs that Anderson brings forth are earnest and contain ■ lyrical deftness to them. Even when he hits the listener with age old ballads of falling in love, I'm swept up with lines like, "The rain fell hard just like your fists," and, "Tonight we're gonna go from friends to others," both

found in "Pheromone." The impetus of Joey Cape's One Week Records is that an artist or band spends seven days in his studio and walks out with a fully fleshed out album. It's clear from these ten tracks that Anderson used his time well. I recommend getting the vinyl version as the clicks and pops from the needle on wax continues to add atmosphere to these songs. —Kayla Greet (One Week, oneweekrecords.com / Little Rocket, littlerocketrecords.com.uk)

#### SEX PRISONER / HARM DONE:

Split: LP

A strong contender for most consistently good modern day powerviolence band, Phoenix's Sex Prisoner continue to serve big heapings of whoop ass. No Comment, Suppression, Despise You ■ ■ way of life, my friends, and Sex Prisoner know it. My only complaint is that their offerings are too short to be on a 12". Harm Done start the pit with ■ extreme-music blitz akin to the madness previously encapsulated on Converge's *Forever Comes Crashing*. If you're keen on metalcore, grindcore, and powerviolence then it's safe to say they've got you covered. Worthy of repeat listens but watch out for that mischievous locked groove on Harm Done's side of the split: I lost a record player once because the platter's motor gave out after I left the house not knowing there was ■ locked groove on an Isis record. Fairly warned be thee, says I. —Juan Espinosa (Deep

Six, deepsixrecords.com / To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

#### SHAME: Songs of Praise: CD/LP

Normally the thought of yet another band playing post-punk in this day and age would cause me to sigh and roll my eyes. Yet I was pleasantly surprised if not enthused by *Songs of Praise*. "One Rizla" is ■ sun-soaked gem for summer with riffs that sound ■ though they're heavily influenced by Joy Division. "Gold Hole" is indebted to The Rolling Stones. The whole album gives ■ big nod to British post-punk acts like Gang Of Four and The Fall, while at times also reminiscent of Rites Of Spring. It's sensitive but also has muscle and that's likely due to the fact that there's ■ aggression that inherently comes with the youth of the band members (they're all under twenty-one). Go watch videos of this British five-piece online or see them live. I've seen hardcore punk bands that bring less intensity than Shame. For a genre that is normally passive, Shame has given it some ferocity and edginess in an entirely un-cliché way. This will definitely end up ■ one of the top albums of the year for me. —Kurt Morris (Dead Oceans)

#### SHARK TOYS: Labyrinths: LP

Los Angeles's modern post-punk sweethearts are all in with this skronky, jangly full-length. If the classic skinny tie L.A. power pop sound is a beat up VHS tape, Daniel and crew are leaning over in front of the VCR

joyfully turning the tracking back and forth, seeing how fucked up they can make it. Glory be the damaged brains that make the damaged music for all the other cretins to bounce around to. Shark Toys and In The Red ■ both making L.A. proud with this one. —Daryl (In The Red)

#### SIDETRACKED / RABID PIGS: Split: 7"

Not since the Hummingbird Of Death/Beartrap split 5" have I heard such a blistering split release. On side A, Sidetracked, in an effort to break the land speed record, blasts through ten songs in less than two minutes. It's frankly awe-inspiring and a little dumb, but that's what I love about it. After a handful of listens, I'm still noticing wrist-shattering drum fills that leave me gobsmacked. When compared to Sidetracked, Rabid Pigs sounds downright leisurely. Side B opener "No Escape" is longer than Sidetracked's ten songs put together. Although Rabid Pigs' brand of chuggy powerviolence doesn't tickle my fancy, I'm impressed by the fact that the "band" is one person: Gregg Harrington. Also, Harrington's slogan, "Root Beer Powered Violence," makes me smile. Excellent release all around. —Sean Arenas (Rotten To The Core, rtcrecords.blogspot.com)

#### SIMPLY SAUCER:

Cyborgs Revisited: 2 ■ LP

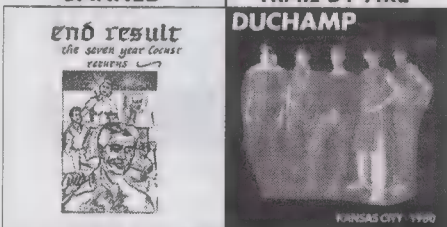
Here's an exhaustive double LP compilation of Simply Saucer's *Cyborgs Revisited* LP released with ■

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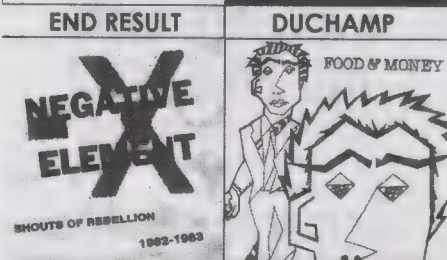
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bonus live LP in ■ really nice gatefold package. A number of different labels have released this over the years, but this In The Red Records double LP vinyl release is really nice. Musically, Simply Saucer are the true definition of '70s proto-punk to me; different than some of the other original early punk influencers—in their case ■ there's also ■ healthy dose of kraut-rock-ish weirdness mixed in too. This is the type of release, which, for years has seemed to simmer just below the surface, is slowly gaining ■ cult following. Now, this record is finally getting ■ long overdue time to shine. —Mark Twistworthy (In The Red, intheredrecords.com)

#### SINCERE ENGINEER: *Rhombithian: CD*

I've been listening to this record, or something from it, once a week since it came out and was so stoked to see it in my review pile, especially since I never managed to get to their set at Fest last year (though I will ■ them with Larry Arms soon). Anyways, what's the big deal about Deanna Belos songs? They seesaw between way-glaring honesty and not giving ■ fuck. She even repeats that sentiment in "Overbite," singing about how she could have been ■ doctor if she really cared enough. The very next track is about how she's gonna ignore the advice of her best friends and fuck something up again. But here's the key to the whole song: "I'm sick of feeling stuck, just because I'm

too afraid of falling back." From ■ distance one might get the idea that the main theme of these songs is apathy and depression. But they truly come from ■ ambitious and caring mind who has been through one too many let downs, one too many disappointed benders. Listening to Deanna growl out the words, "I am nothing / I'm just ■ empty bottle shattering," is ■ bit of ■ heart break and ■ bit of an inspiration. There's something about hearing others tackle the darker parts of life that make ■ dream real big and float back to reality, but with ■ extra spark and determination. Yeah, these songs are a gut punch and ■ kick in the ass. I will add that it's been interesting getting struck by this record while I was still drinking, and then getting to know it again sober. There ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ real gems in there for both sides of the coin, if that's what you're looking for. —Kayla Greet (Red Scare)

#### SIXBREW BANTHA: *Blight: 12"*

Canada's prolific grind outfit return with ■ refreshing 12" worth of precise and calculated death-tinged grind. They somehow perfectly straddle the line between technique and brutality, which is a hard feat this deep into ■ catalog. Fans of their earlier records should take note—and if you're not on the bandwagon yet—this is as good ■ starting point as any ■ this recording is worth a listen, even if you're not the grind aficionado. —Ian Wise (To Live A Lie)

#### SLAUGHTER BOYS: *Self-titled: 7" ■*

Given the band's uninspired name and the fact that the phrase "San Diego Rock'n'Roll" was inscribed more than once on the record and accompanying note, I imagined my options for how this band might sound fell squarely between Slaughter & The Dogs and regular Slaughter. I was pleasantly surprised when they turned out to be ■ completely acceptable admixture of melodic '70s Brit-punk sounds like Chelsea with more grunt-rousing early '80s Brit-punk sounds like Blitz (but less yelly), although the band, to their credit, never actually really sounds like they're from Britain, while the record sleeve looks more like something ■ San Francisco industrial label would have done in 1981. People would have probably popped big boners over this one in 1983, and I'm fairly impressed with it in whatever year this is now. BEST SONG: "Dogmatic." BEST SONG TITLE: "Rot." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I think "admixture" means pretty much the same thing as "mixture," I just used that word to be a douche. —Rev. Nørð (Self-released)

#### SMUDJAS: *THE: What We Have Is Today: LP*

Wow, this is right in my wheelhouse! The Smudjas are from Italy and offer ■ mix of melodic punk with mid-'90s DIY emo tinges. The songs are sung in English with personal type relationship-based lyrics, which come off as ultimately full of

meaning without being cheesy. This essentially sounds like everything in the world that I like while ultimately also sounding like nothing I have ever liked before—familiar, yet original and fresh sounding. It's no surprise to read that they previously toured with the U.K. band Wild Animals, who are great ■ well. Recommended. —Mark Twistworthy (Adagio 830, adagio830.de)

#### SNARKY: *Self-titled: ■*

Region rock punks drinking Red Dagger wine listening to the *Can of Pork* compilation. There's yelling, singing, thrashing fuzzed-out chord strums, single-note picking hooks, and more. Snarky truly runs the gamut, alternating styles (check the leap from Thin Lizzy dual leads at the end of "78" into the twitching snot-fest of "TattleTale" that itself contains a bad-trip bridge) between every track while maintaining true punk vision. Do yourself ■ favor. —Matt Seward (Lifer, lifertapes.bigcartel)

#### SONGS FOR SNAKES

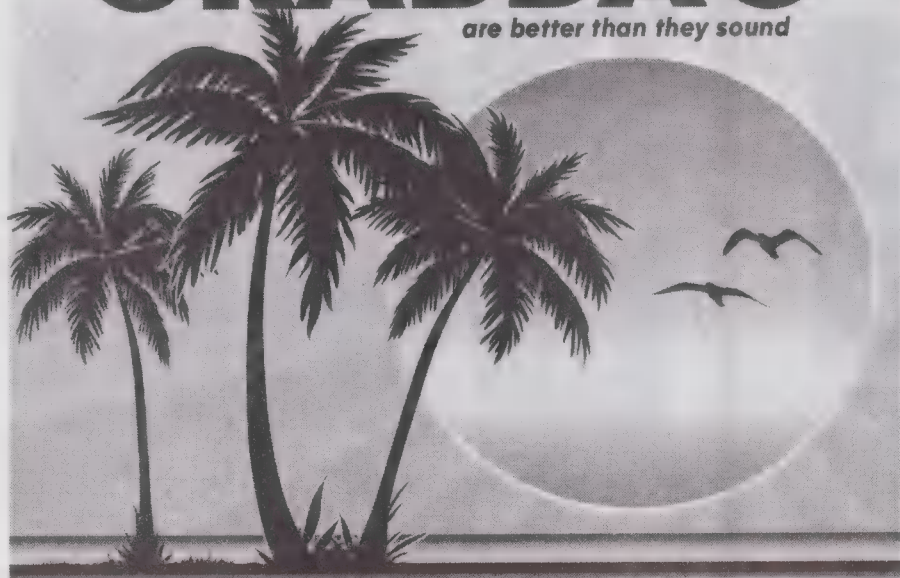
##### *Crystal Vapour Figure: LP*

Me last issue: "This Songs For Snakes 7" is good! I wanna hear more." Razorcake HQ: "Say no more, fam." This ten-song LP continues with the Bay Area band's silt, Bob Mould-inspired punk. The guitars come in lush layers, the drums crash, and the vocals bray above it all. Sometimes the songs slow down and expand for longer, moodier jams that bring Jawbreaker's

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"Bivouac" to mind. I like the fast ones better, but this record's a hit that transcends its influences. —Chris Terry (songsforsnakes.bandcamp.com)

#### SPECIAL MOVES: January: ■

From what I can tell, this is a solo project. Definite lo-fi/basement recording. Mid-tempo, brightly recorded pop stuff with a bit of a serrated edge, like if the Superchunk folks weren't the seasoned vets they are now and—full of youthful abandon—ran their vocals through a processor and recorded stuff live on a four-track with one mic and called it good. There's a certain charm. —Keith Rosson (Reflective Tapes)

#### SPELLS: ■ *Boring Meeting: 7*

It's been over a year since Denver's Spells released their LP *Staying In > Going Out*, which I freaked out over back in issue 96. On *Big Boring Meeting*, Spells have returned to bewitch our ears with more of their unique blend of melodic yet simultaneously gritty garage punk. Everything I loved about the band's previous releases is here. I don't know how the band manages to conjure up such magical songwriting with each release, but there are hypnotizing riffs and enchanting vocal harmonies packed into every track. The six tracks on *Big Boring Meeting* lean more on the rockin' side of the band's sound, as in the title track, and my favorite track, "I Wanna Know," with its jangly surf

guitar riffs. After the first listen, you will be possessed into singing along. I don't know what cryptic rites I'll have to cast to get Spells to come here on tour, but you'd better believe I'll be practicing my incantations. —Paul J. Comeau (Snappy Little Numbers, snappylittlenumbers.blogspot.com)

#### SRIRACHA-CHAS, THE: Self-titled: CD

Helmed by Razorcake contributor Kevin Dunn, The Sriracha-chas are mid tempo punk with gruff vocals and creative time signatures. Some of their songs are goofy jams like "Barbed Wire," wherein they sing about the sharp fence toppers in their underpants. The very next track comes out swinging with a raucous riff, screeches almost to a stop in the verses, and then picks up the prior momentum when launching into the chorus screaming, "Gotta turn it up / 'Cus I'm older than punk." My favorite song title is "Patriarchy Is for Dicks." It's so simple, cheeky, and quite literal. I suppose that same sentiment could apply to the overall lyrical content of the whole disc. These guys manage to pack sixteen tracks into only thirty-nine minutes, which is surprising especially since many of the songs slow down considerably in the middle. Their stuff is stripped down slow grooves, yet also high energy and dancey. Great Minutemen-like tunes that'd be great for a summer road trip with the windows down and the stereo cranked. —Kayla Greet (Girth)

#### STIFFS, THE: Self-titled: 7"

It's no secret that I get nerdy about punk rock history, Canadian punk rock history in particular. It makes what Supreme Echo is doing all the more exciting for me. Arguably, the most famous Canadian punk rock song is "Fuck You." The song has been a long-time staple in DOA's set list, but it first appeared on The Subhumans' self-titled 12" EP. The truth of the matter is that it wasn't The Subhumans song originally, either. It belonged to The Stiffs. In fact, this single was all set to become the first Vancouver punk put to vinyl in 1978, but before it could be released Gerry and Mike broke up the band to start The Subhumans with Wimpy and Dimwit, taking some songs with them. The record contains the studio tracks for the original release, a demo recording of another song, and a practice recording from Chuck Biscuit's house for a grand total of seven songs. Of course, the studio tracks sound better than the practice recordings, but I find it amazing how a basement tape from 1978 can sound as good as it does. The Subhumans may very well be my favorite band of all time, and I was shocked to learn that another one of their classic songs, "Oh Canaduh," was also originally a Stiffs song. I had no idea! Another quality punk rock history lesson from Supreme Echo. I consider this required listening. —Ty Stranglehold (Supreme Echo, supremeecho.bandcamp.com)

#### STREET THREAT: Start the Chaos: CD

On *Start the Chaos*, California's Street Threat tear through a string of short, fast, and loud hardcore punk rippers that call to mind some of the genre's all-time great bands. Warning: This CD contains riffs known to the State of California to cause circle pits, moshing, and other mayhem. Use only under punk supervision. —Paul J. Comeau (Big Pharma, bigpharmarecords@outlook.com)

#### STREET THREAT:

##### *Us Against the World: CD*

From the sound of this disc, it is apparent that the influence of the Pist and the early days of Punkcore Records are still being felt. I liked but burned out on this kinda stuff two decades ago, but if you can't get enough of bands like Submachine, A Global Threat, and the like, this band will be right up your alley. —Mike Frame (Self-released, streethreat.bandcamp.com)

#### STUNTED: Fault: CS

No Trend, Butthole Surfers, and Bauhaus filtered through the most nightmarish visions of New York no wave you could ever imagine. The perfect marriage between garage punk and synth punk without conforming to any preconceived notions of what that might entail. Members of Nopes, for anyone keeping score. Aces all around. —Juan Espinosa (Drwg, drwgmusic.bandcamp.com)

In the old days, punk was all about the "Wild Youth" and the "young idea"... Now that all the punks are old it's the kids that are a problem, so we say...



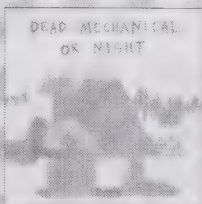
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**STUPID DAIKINI, THE:**  
**Everything Is Fine: LP**

This band is a mix bag of many awesome things. They've got the shoegaze element in that they fuzz out their guitars. There's ukulele throughout the whole record which adds an uncommon melody and brightens up each song. And then there are the vocals—Melissa hits high registers while also rounding out a sultry, bluesy sound that somehow has room for some serious attitude. With lyrics like theirs, they just wouldn't work unless there was a dose of sneering anger injected in the mix. Especially on "GFY" (Go Fuck Yourself). It's possible I've never heard a sweeter background song while the lyrics—"I hope you fucking suffer / Go away / You're a dick and I hate you"—are beautifully belted out. And for a band named after a throwaway line in *Willow*, it's nice to see another '80s fantasy film (*The Neverending Story*) written about in "Rock Biter." I have to say that the saccharine songs are a complete juxtaposition to the last two tracks on the record which are heavily focused on murder—one of an ex, and one of a lover and his/her mistress. While it catches the attention of the listener, I don't know that murder ballads are what I was looking for in The Stupid Daikini. Whatever helps exorcise the demons, I suppose! —Kayla Greet (It's Alive!)

**SUBSONICS: *Flesh Colored Paint*: CD**

You know, Subsonics are a band that I should already know and love, but truthfully, I've always passed them by. No excuses, really. Too many bands and so little time, I suppose. But they've been kicking it for likely twenty years now, since I recall them playing here in Ottawa in (at least) the early two thousands, if not the late '90s, not to mention flipping through their records in stores, which were always on labels I love dearly (Get Hip, Lance Rock, and of course, the almighty Slovenly). *Flesh Colored Paint* isn't far off from what I expected... bluesy, low-key garage, full of keys and dual vox for an added touch. I feel pretty silly for overlooking them all these years. They'd pair well with (and I'd recommend this to fans of) Chain And The Gang/Weird War or even something like Speedball Baby/Heavy Trash. I'll be spinning this for a while. Music isn't dead yet, I don't think. —Steve Adamyk (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

**SUBSONICS: *Flesh Colored Paint*: LP**

Atlanta weirdos continue their garage exotica assault on their eighth full length. Super cool B-movie garage rock'n'roll, taking the best of some smoky Vegas bar; a fired-up Little Richard concert; old, dusty, long-forgotten '60s garage 45s; slicked-back '50s rock'n'roll; and some late '70s Dead Boys sneer. These days, it's tough to find originality, but some folks beat their own fucking

path. These cats have been at this shit for a couple of decades and have worked out they don't need to be part of your club. I'm sure they don't want me a part of it, but fuck, sign me the fuck up. —Tim Brooks (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

**SUFFER HEAD: *Tedious and Brief*: CS**

Atonal jazz punk. No thanks. Tedious is the word I'd use, yes. There are some interesting rhythms and textures buried here, but, ultimately, digging for them is a bit of a chore. Their best song is "Meditation," which almost sounds like a Swing Ding Amigos tribute. I wish more of the record sounded like that. Sorry, guys. —Bryan Static (Self-released, no address listed)

**SUPERCHUNK:**

***What Time Is It Alive*: LP**

I love Superchunk. I have ever since 1990 and I was a dumb teen looking for new music. *Spin* magazine ran some kind of "up and coming bands" piece, and there was a live photo of Superchunk. The energy conveyed in that photo was enough for me to start the search that resulted in my finding *No Pocky for Kitty*, and I was hooked. After many albums I've remained a fan, so obviously I was excited to hear a new album was coming our way and that it was a scathing indictment of what passes for society in this day and age. Expectations were high, and I wasn't let down. It kicks off with the title track and doesn't let up. Labels

quickly fall by the wayside. Indie rock? Punk rock? I don't know and don't care. This music is speaking to my very core. It is a nice feeling to know that there are bands that I started listening to over half my lifetime ago that are still making relevant music. This is my favorite album by them since *On the Mouth*. —Ty Stranglehold (Merge, mergerecords.com)

**WHAT: *Wasty Tasty*: CD**

I'll say this: not what I was expecting. Initial impressions led me to believe Swhat would be a metallic hardcore band, or something making far too much of an effort to be "intense," if you get my drift. Thankfully, the band plays well-crafted, standard '90s melodic punk, possibly in the vein of everything from Murphy's Law, Fluf, Apocalypse Hoboken, and specifically the fast Overwhelming Colorfast tunes. Is that a weird comparison? Maybe, but I made it nonetheless (it made sense while listening to it, at least). Strong record from these Aussies. —Steve Adamyk (Heart Of The Rat, heartoftheratrerecords.com)

**TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET:**

***Goin' South in Wyo: 7"***

If you're ever playing a game of "name a band from every state," Teenage Bottlerocket really helps when you get to the western mountain states. Aiming to capitalize on this somewhat useless trivia fact, TBR reminds you once again that they are from Wyoming. I haven't been





feeling great about the last few TBR releases, but I still listen whenever ■ ■ ■ one drops. Their sound, well past definition at this point, has its ups and downs. At the very least, it's always comforting to hear new songs with Kody and Ray's voices. That being said, I don't think *Goin' Back to Why* really highlights the band's chops in the way a good single should. I feel bad saying I don't really like ■ TBR release, because they are one of those bands that I listen to regularly when I just don't know what else to listen to. I have to end this on ■ positive note. They just released a really excellent album of cover songs called *Steal the Covers*, which is really well done. You can hear their excitement to play songs they love. Get this 7" if you're ■ completionist. If not, there's a non-zero chance these ones will appear on the next LP. —Bryan Static (Fat)

#### TEENAGE DEPRESSION:

##### ■ ■ ■ or Die: 7" EP

*Skank or Die* is what it's like to fall in love with ■ record before even listening to it. I'd never heard it before; doesn't matter. The snarl-fist-expression of the dorky kid on the cover, the name and song titles, provide no surprises. It's exactly what you'd expect (and perfect). It's notably a reissue of a scarce New Jersey record from the early '80s, and obviously, because nothing new could be this brilliantly stupid. Dumb-dumb hardcore with ■ sense of humor, with the focus on the humor part. Flawless

in all areas. Packed with nine tracks in around ten minutes. Rerun Records has been ■ killer power pop reissue label that I've personally purchased a dozen records from previously, so I knew damn well I'd enjoy this, even if it isn't a skinny tie band. Oh, and can someone please message me and let me know what the significance is behind the song "False Jesii Part 1"? Like, are Pissed Jeans just huge fans of Teenage Depression that they named a song in homage to them? Or rather, does False Jesii the name have some other significance? Inquiring minds need to know. —Steve Adamyk (Rerun, rerunrecordsstl.com)

#### TIMEKILLER: Defects of Character: 7"

*Sex Vid / Total Abuse* style hardcore that sometimes feels like it has ■ heavy Motörhead influence, and sometimes gets super weird and droney. It's chaotic and savage, blistering and burly—a feedbacky dirge that snarls and growls like a great, cavernous chamber suddenly filling with flames. Oxygen depleted. Hell doesn't seem so strange. It's ■ unique and enjoyable six tracks of noisy hardcore punk. —Daryl (Self-released)

#### TIPPY: Self-titled and Public Displays of Affection: CS

Ugh, I was totally not prepared to listen to this cassette, which contains not one but two albums that made me sink totally onto the floor and forget all the things that I could pretend were making me happy. It's true that "I feel

dumb when I don't do shit," but I'm not doing that because I'm listening to this record! This would be in a playlist based around Snail Mail, which I recently saw on a Spotify playlist described as "lo-fi indie and slacker rock songs for people who care ■ lot about music and not much else" and that sounds about right. This is more upbeat than The Good Life but with ■ similar level of inner turmoil. The difference is that it's not because of a relationship failing or love dissolved, but just ■ general distaste for the things that are supposed to make us feel good and the overwhelming sense that being happy is a total scam. With this message throughout, the self-titled half of this tape is kind of jangly-folk-punky and the second half is that but with Postal Service instrumentation instead. With the utmost respect, my quick and dirty description would be that this covers the same range of Bon Iver's records but without being the kind of thing that will make major labels want you to write songs for pop musicians. And that's a good thing. —Theresa W. (Rare Plant, rareplant.bandcamp.com)

#### TOTALLY SLOW: Imperium: CD

Ever wake up in the morning, check the news, then flip over and scream into your pillow? What if you screamed into ■ microphone instead? Try it and you might get Totally Slow's new EP. The North Carolina band has added ■ second guitarist who is pushing the band in ■ faster direction that matches

the frantic mood of our times. Check out the way the seething opener "Inside Voice" erupts into high-speed skate punk, or the whoah-ohs that blast off "Other People." There are three punk rippers, ■ sing-song alt rock cut, ■ garagey track with an organ, and an Articles Of Faith cover. I get the idea that Totally Slow ■ still refining their new sound, but they're off to ■ promising start and I will keep playing this until they make a new LP. —Chris Terry (Self Aware, selfawarerecords.bandcamp.com)

#### TOWARD SPACE: Avoid the Draft: CD


I'm really getting ■ taste of weirdness this review cycle and it suits me just fine. Toward Space are coming out of Richmond, Va. and have this crazy mix of blues swagger and spazzo-surf going on. I know that people consider wacky "sounds like..." comparisons to be lazy reviewing, but who fucking cares? Today, I'm that lazy reviewer. Here goes. Toward Space sounds like The B-52's and Detroit Cobras smoking bath salts in the basement at a party being hosted by East Bay Ray and Kid Congo Powers. There, I did it. I will also add that I think this is great and I plan on checking out their other albums. —Ty Stranglehold (Toward Space, towardspace.bandcamp.com)

#### TOXIC REASONS: No Pity: 7" EP

Once again *Artcore* zine offers up ■ great accompanying piece of vinyl with its new issue and this time it's the turn of Toxic Reasons to offer

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up its wares. These tracks were recorded for a radio show in 1986 during the Kill By Remote Control tour and provide quality versions of "No Pity," "White Noise," "Break the Bank," and "Harvest." As always, *Artcore* goes the extra mile in terms of packaging with an eight page booklet sleeve featuring an interview and some great photos—in which I feature a few times—from a gig the band played in my hometown of Newport, Wales also in 1986. To top it all off, the download of the 7" also includes the live set from that Welsh show in all of its riotous glory. An excellent release. —Rich Cocksedge (Artcore, artcorefanzine@email.bigcartel.com, artcorefanzine.co.uk)

#### TOYOTAS: *Turn Away: 10"*

I've never seen anything quite like this before: The sleeve to this one-sided 10" is a thick gatefold jacket made out of that unbleached, shopping-bag-brown cardboard that was mildly popular among the artier of the punk/emo set in the '90s for its utilitarian vibe and conduciveness to screen printing. It has rounded corners and is screen-printed in red and black. The front cover art has some sharp lines and arrows that give it a new wave feel, which is a bit at odds with the old-timey medical diagram of a human head that serves as the focal point. The back cover has the song titles and some minimal, transistor board-ish graphics, plus a die-cut C shape exposing the vinyl underneath. This gives it the

unexpected (and likely unintended) feel of a pizza box. The left inner panel has full-color photos of the band members, framed by additional inner sleeve die cuts which leave the outer cover untouched. There's also a hand-numbered number, in pencil (of course) on this side, while the other side has more red and black printing and a die cut hole that exposes the vinyl's label. The vinyl is semi-transparent grey, streaked with black wisps. The label is black with big red "TOYOTAS" and the text is brown, presumably to match the cardboard. The four songs are decent, well-played and recorded, and sound either like European Briefs or a Reducers (Connecticut) record played on a faulty turntable that spins a few rpm too quickly. Enjoyable, but quite overshadowed by the packaging, so if your intent was to have the packaging leaving the biggest impression, good work. **BEST SONG** "Try It Out." **BEST SONG TITLE** "Outta My Head." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT**: I got 75/172. —Rev. Nørb (Stencil Trash)

#### TRASHIES, THE: *The Octogon: LP*

Imagine four, no six, maybe seven humans in a 10'x 10' room filled with thrift store keyboards and guitars and enough effects pedals to bury a body beneath engaged in capturing the voices in their heads onto audio tape. Mothers Of Invention trapped in a recording closet with an overflowing toilet. Pere Ubu with more gunk rock.

The first side ends with a Largas trip kissing you goodnight ("Fresh Hunny"), while the second ends with "Shovel," the most hip-swingin', booty-shakin' ode to a garden tool ever laid to wax. The in-between is mind-altering. Recommended to get lost in more than once. —Matt Seward (Fine Concepts)

#### TROPHY KNIFE: *Self-titled: CS*

This two-piece band lays down some noisy indie/punk stuff with very demo style production. Some songs have a bit of an early '90s San Diego style along the lines of Drive Like Jehu. This is like exactly the type of stuff that folks who buy a lot of tapes from current bands would like a whole lot. —Mike Frame (Quality Time, qualitytimerecords.com)

#### TRUCK STOP LOVE:

##### *Can't Hear It: 1991-1994 LP*

Apparently, Kansas City's Truck Stop Love were a bit of a minor big deal back in the '90s. I'll acknowledge that I was never aware of the band back then so this collection of remastered demos has become my gateway to the band's back catalogue. When the band is on rocking form it reminds me a bit of Superchunk, whereas when it hits the Americana trail, I'm minded to consider The Jayhawks as a comparison. I enjoyed this enough to seek out and buy *How I Spent My Summer Vacation* released in 1995. —Rich Cocksedge (Black Site, blacksiterecords@gmail.com, black-site.org)

#### TWIN FOXES:

##### *Sleeping on the Attic Floor: LP*

Occasionally, the powers that be miss the mark on assigning and some poor band gets unfairly slayed. This three-piece from the East Coast play a mix of loud/quiet, off-kilter '90s navel gazing emo. I imagine these delicate boys playing with no shoes and their back to the crowd, their LP shelves chock full of A Week Last Sunday, Converge, and dare I say Jawbreaker records (just the melodic parts). It has more of the "modern bangs over the eyes and tight pants" vibe than the "hand screened patches, no shoes, and thick spectacles" feel I knew (and hated) back in the day. Bursts of frantic discordant noise coupled with mellow, light-sung moments—this has all the ingredients of the worst shit I have ever heard. I cannot imagine anyone reading this rag being able to stomach more than thirty seconds of this tripe. —Tim Brooks (Midnight Werewolf, midnightwerewolf.com)

#### TWO MAN ADVANTAGE:

##### *Bar Down: CDEP*

Ever wonder what it feels like to go speeding down the ice with a wooden stick in your hand, ready to bust some heads and take some names? Well, this record may give you an idea. If you don't know why the Winter Classic is so much fun to watch then listen to the first song on this CD. How does it feel to be "riding the pine," waiting for your turn in the spotlight? "Stickboy"



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may give you ■ clue. "Here Come the Dinosaurs" is my favorite song on this one. But if you like to hang out in dive bars that play *Snapshot* on TV and where pouring ■ beer on your neighbor's head is answered with ■ shrug, then *Bar Down* deserves to be the soundtrack. —Sean Koepenick (Self-released, twomanadvantage.bandcamp.com)

#### VENDETTA:

##### **Modern Rockers: Flexidisc**

It turns out that it isn't just the west coast of Canada that is being archeologically sifted through for long-lost punk rock artifacts by Supreme Echo. This time the focus is ■ our nation's capital Ottawa and one of its earliest punk rock and roll bands, Vendetta. As is often the case with these aural history lessons that the label serves up, I was completely out of the loop on this one (and I am someone who is fairly well versed in the annals of Canadian punk). I don't know what I was expecting from these two tracks that originally came out in 1979, but it certainly wasn't the face-melting rock blast I received. Seriously, you could have put this ■ for me completely blind telling me it was a new Candy Snatchers single and I would have believed it without question. I bet Larry May and the boys had no idea that their true spirit animal band lived ■ few states north and over the border twenty-five years beforehand. This one is on a heavy duty round

flexi like the Zellots one I reviews ■ couple of issues ago. Feels and plays like ■ record. It also comes with an info booklet. Don't sleep on your chance to get in on some amazing Canadian history! —Ty Stranglehold (Supreme Echo, supremeecho.bandcamp.com)

#### VERY MENTAL: **Misconstrued: 7"**

A double-stab of raw punk rock taking its cues from prime Killed By Death riffage. Both tracks here deal in sludgy rock'n'roll dripping with 'tude, slashing and burning its way from needle groove to noggin. Drop it in a DJ set between The Slugs and D-Day and none will be the wiser. —Jimmy Alvarado (Total Punk, floridasdying.com)

#### VICES TO THE GRAVE: **Self-titled: CD**

Third album from this Tempe, Ariz. four piece. I am hearing some NOFX sprinkled in with a dash of Face To Face. Tight rhythms, rock solid drumming, and enough oohs and aahs that even Greg Hetson would be jealous! "Early Goodbye" and "Enjoy the Taste" are the standouts here. This band is ■ to watch. —Sean Koepenick (Self-released, vicestothegrave.bandcamp.com)

#### VNLVX: **Is Unlux: CS**

Out of the ashes of Ventura, Calif.'s Messenger rises Vnlvx. Sasha's highly melodic vocals paired with Derek's painterly guitar tones create a sound that's fully activated. It has

a very "now" sound to it, like it's the natural progression of punk-based rock music. Nothing retro, no regurgitated styles or formulas, just ■ fresh sound. Vnlvx does not appear to be afraid to do what feels right, and it sounds fan-fucking-tastic! —Daryl (Burger)

#### WANNA-BES, THE:

##### **Out Went the Lights: LP**

I went into this record with zero preconceived notions as to what might be contained in these grooves. Never heard of the band, never heard of the record label, and inferred nothing from the album cover (except that this band must be from Seattle). Needle drop... instant recognition... classic Ramones-inspired pop punk. And I mean that in a good way! (An unfortunate but necessary qualification.) First off: the sound. This record's sonics remind ■ of the Riverdales' *Storm the Streets* record (their best by far). The drums are dry and dark, the guitars are raw and thick, there's ■ nice fat bottom end, the vocals are melodic but strong (and with ■ subtle Leonard Grave Phillips vibe), all combined in ■ perfectly balanced mix. Were it not for ■ few Marked Men-ish melodies, this band and record could very well have been straight outta Lookout! circa 1995, influenced only by the Ramones, Teenage Head, The Queers, and Dan Vapid, but acknowledging the future existence of the Spits.

...And second, the most important thing: songs. Too many bands get the perfect sound, all click-tracked and auto-tuned, the requisite oohs, ahhs, harmonies, breakdowns, fast songs and love songs; all the boxes ticked. But the songs sound ripped off, clichéd, dull, or just not fucking punk rock! Contrarily, each and every song on *Out Went the Lights* works. It's ■ punk record with melody. Familiar but original. This is the rare, new pop punk record that deserves ■ slot in the discerning punk's collection. —Chad Williams (Mom's Basement, momsbasementrecords.bandcamp.com)

#### WASTED LIVES: **Self-titled: 7"**

I really have to hand it to Jason at Supreme Echo. I thought I knew a lot about obscure Canadian punk rock but I am truly the student here. I had no recollection of Wasted Lives (they did appear on the *Vancouver Complication* LP) yet he has managed to locate the original tapes from entire recorded output in 1979, have it cleaned up, and lovingly released ■ ■ part of the label's archival series (see my reviews of Zellots, The Stiffs, and Vendetta as well). I am in love with this record! Four songs of distinctly Vancouver-sounding punk rock (that guitar sound is unmistakable) but Wasted Lives offer up a little twist in the way of a kind of slight post-punk sound (proto-post-punk? Ha!) and a touch of hardcore that has me





thinking of T.S.O.L. a tiny bit. Some of the members of this short-lived unit would go on to other notable bands (The Modernettes, U-JERK5, and I, Braineater), but how I've never even heard of Wasted Lives after all of these years is beyond me. Chalk up another win for Supreme Echo. —Ty Stranglehold (Supreme Echo, [supremeecho.bandcamp.com](http://supremeecho.bandcamp.com))

**WICK AND THE TRICKS: Not Enough: 7"**  
I didn't like this at first; it just wasn't pushing any buttons. After a couple of days I ■■■■ back to it and, wondrously, the songs had all stuck in my head and this time around I was singing along with glee. This is rock'n'roll infused with punk and glam, all drenched in gallons of sweat and totally catchy as fuck. —Rich Cocksedge (Black Site, [blacksite.records@gmail.com](mailto:blacksite.records@gmail.com), [black-site.org](http://black-site.org))

**WILD WINGS: Showbizz: CD**  
This is ■ weird one. A lot of it starts out like standard-issue snotty punk rock'n'roll, but a fair number of the tracks disintegrate into dissonant post-punk noodling, psych rock jamming, or weirder. Whatever it is, it sounds dirty and like it's made for and by dudes who wear leather jackets. —Indiana Laub (Lion's Care, [lionscarerecordings.com](http://lionscarerecordings.com))

**WINDOWSILL, THE / HORROR SECTION: Split: 7"**  
The Windowsill: The track, "Damned," offers some blistering

and distorted guitar riffs joined by traditional pop punk vocals. Horror Section: is more of the same. The vocals weren't very interesting to me, but were hardly a deal-breaker either. The drum work might actually be the shining point of the record, meshing nicely with the guitar throughout the release. The songs were incredibly similar and aren't very interesting, but they're not repugnant either. This is effectively just a run-of-the-mill pop punk 7". —Anna Farr (Eccentric Pop, [eccentricpop.com](http://eccentricpop.com))

**YARD WORK: Earn the Rock: LP**  
As ■ recent financially-forced big city expat with a house and yard, this record looked like it would help ease the new suburban life meniality. I mean, songs like "Looking for ■ Wrench," "In the Weeds," "Kinks in the Hose" and "Ladder Climber" gave ■ hope for much-needed, unfortunately relatable, lyrical comic relief, all in a punk record. But this is dad rock. Suburban dad rock. Ham-fisted vocals with a Jim Carroll delivery, minus the poetic meter. The music's ■ little more alterna-rock, garage band style, kind of like four suburban dads got together one afternoon when their wives were out of town with the kids, got buzzed on Bud Light Lime, and made ■ record. —Chad Williams (Rock Tumbler, [rocktumblerrecords.com](http://rocktumblerrecords.com))

**YARD WORK: Earn the Rock: LP**  
I'm thirty-nine and already dreaming about the hardcore band I'm gonna

start when my kid's old enough to be embarrassed. I'd like to think my band would be this odd and original and yet resolutely parental—what's more "dad" than ■ record of songs about household maintenance with titles like "In the Weeds" and "Ladder Climber"? Even with the silly concept, this doesn't scan as a novelty. Austin's Yard Work pound out vamped garage rock that sounds like ■ cross between Half Japanese and The Cramps. I hope I'm this cool in a few years. —Chris Terry (Rock Tumbler, [rocktumblerrecords.com](http://rocktumblerrecords.com), [bandcamp.com](http://bandcamp.com))

**YARD WORK: Earn the Rock: LP**  
So, what happens if you take a handful of aging Austin, Texas garage punk luminaries who spent time in the '90s playing in well-regarded bands like The Motards, The Chumps, and Eastside Suicides, putting them in a band together in 2018 that tackles topics more closely reflecting their current lives and interests? The result is Yard Work. They sing songs about, you know, maintaining their yards, misplaced tools, weeds, and kinks in their water hoses, and while the entire premise seems laughable, don't be mistaken... this isn't ■ "joke" record. Musically, it's a record filled with bass heavy post-punk that has a kind of Protomartyr-ish feel at times, and it's really good. Recommended. —Mark Twistworthy (Rock Tumbler, [rocktumblerrecords.com](http://rocktumblerrecords.com))

## YOU AND ALL YOUR FRIENDS ARE DEAD: Self-titled: CS

You And All Your Friends Are Dead is an experimental powerviolence band that draws from: noise, hardcore, and grind influences. The faded and enigmatic cover of the cassette represented the music well. This release was effectively thirteen tracks of dirty punk music condensed into eight songs. Strict demarcations between the songs were ■ bit tough to pinpoint for me, but the release is quite the trip. "Crime Pays When Nazis Cry" kicked the album off with some pretty catchy distorted guitars over tormented vocals. The next few tracks continued in this vein until some bizarre and unexpected melodies crept into the mix around the middle of the tape. Muddled together with the fast and (pleasantly) monotonous riffs found throughout the release, the concoction between these haunting synths and grindy instrumentation was disorienting and heavy. The vocals remained mostly consistent over the simplistic (yet appropriate) drumming on the record, generally emotive and slightly grotesque. This thing is really good, and fans of powerviolence, hardcore, and experimental could probably get behind it. —Anna Farr (Vomit Burger, [thevomitburger.com](http://thevomitburger.com))



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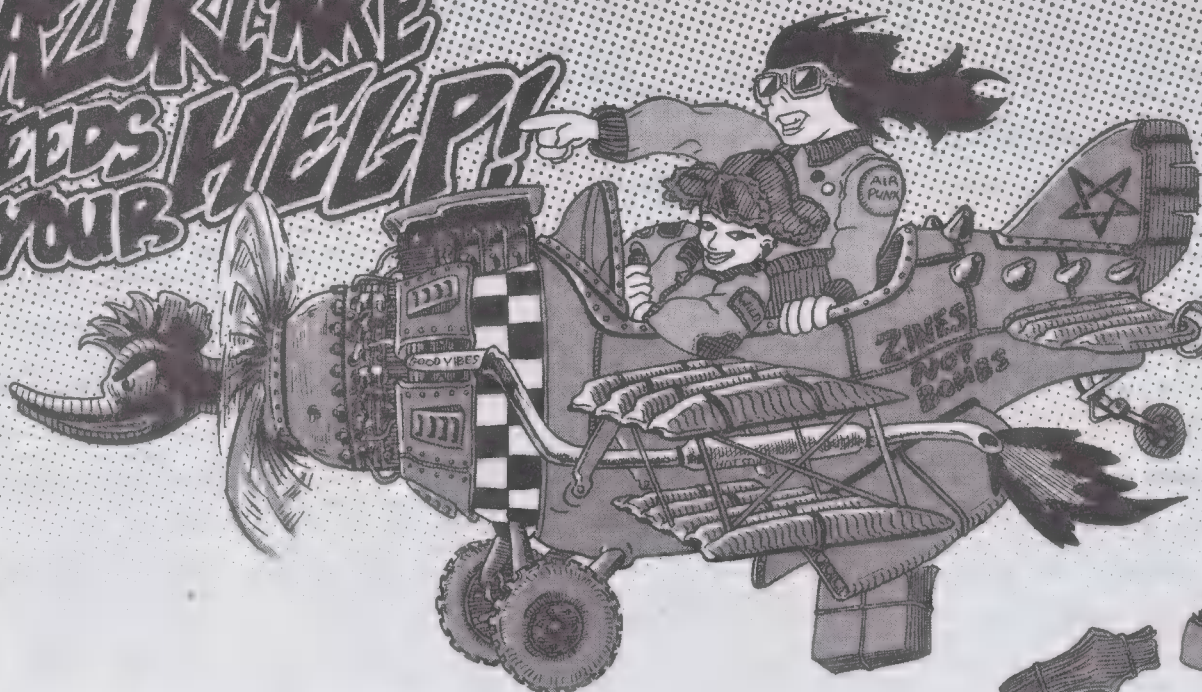
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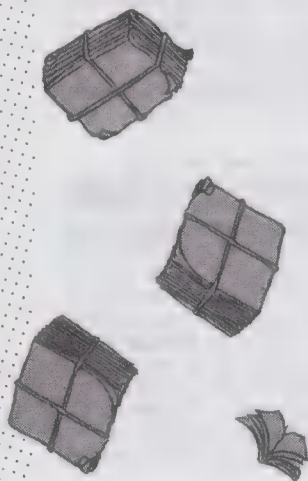


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- **Sophomore Lounge**,  
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- **Sorry State**,  
317 W Morgan St., Suite  
#105, Raleigh, NC 27601
- **Sounds Rad**,  
5203 Columbia Rd.,  
Suite A,  
Columbia, MD 21044
- **Sudden Death**,  
Cascades PO Box 43001,  
Burnaby, BC., V5G 3H0  
Canada
- **Tinderbox Music**,  
3148 Bryant Ave S.,  
Minneapolis, MN 55481
- **To Live A Lie**  
c/o Will Butler,  
2825 Van Dyke Ave.,  
Raleigh, NC 27607
- **Too Much Rock**,  
4027 Locust St.,  
Kansas City, MO 64110
- **Voodoo Rhythm**,  
Wankdorffeldstrasse 92,  
3014 Bern, Switzerland
- **Wrinky Dink**,  
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Pine Bush, NY  
12566



## RAZORCAKE RECORD REVIEW GUIDELINES AND FAQs

• The address to send all review material is Razorcake, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042. You may address it to specific reviewers. Just make sure they're active.

• Full album art is required for a review. Pre-releases go into the trash.

• We will not review download cards or a link to an album.

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• We know mail's expensive, but we send full copies of the zine as a thanks to all who send us material to review (if your postal address is provided).

• Put a postal address on each and every piece of music sent in. Many

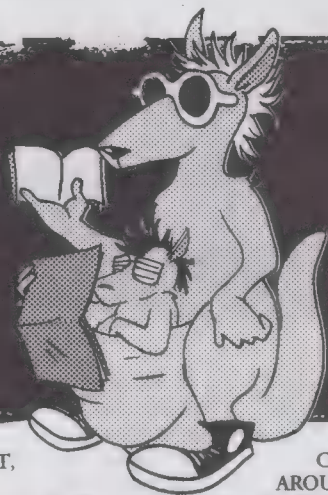
packages get separated and given to different reviewers.

• Reviews may take six months. Be patient. We're bi-monthly and have reviewers worldwide.



# ZINE REVIEWS

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address so that we know  
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Obnoxious and in-  
your-face, basically a  
print version of *The  
Casualties*.

—Andrea L. Smith  
LIT & PUNKS

## ADULTING: HOW TO BE AN ADULTIER ADULT, \$3, 4" x 5½", 19 pgs.

*Adulting* is one of eighteen short self-help guides written by Dr. Faith G. Harper and published by Microcosm. At first sight, I thought, oh boy, *Adulting*, here comes some soft skill bullshit by one of my millennial peers—people like ■■■ who ■■■ make a GIF but can't fill out ■ tax form. In reality, the author of *Adulting*, Faith G. Harper is super smart. She's a doctor with loads of mental health degrees and experience, and the zine is more or less about being a responsible, uh, grown person. In her words, we're *Adulting* "when we are our best and most mature selves in every situation." Harper breaks up her advice into page-long sections. Her breezy delivery makes for easy reading. *Adulting* would be ■ nice graduation gift or a cool read for some young person who's moving out of the house. —Jim Joyce (Microcosm, 2752 N Williams Ave., Portland, OR 97227)

## ANALOGUE SEPPUKU, \$2 5½" x 8½", glossy, 10 pgs.

This is ■ short zine put out by Muzai Records that includes ■ CD of ten songs by ten various bands that are on the label. Muzai Records is a New Zealand label that is based in Leeds, England (I don't understand how that works, either). The zine has interviews with two of the label's bands, Dharma Dogs and Triumphs. It's also got a rant by Austin Cunningham about the disappearing music venues in New Zealand (spoiler alert: it's due to gentrification). I did enjoy the CD, ■ some of the bands (like Dharma Dogs) are recording good songs. The label puts out ■ wide variety of music, ■ even if the zine isn't that spectacular, it's worth checking out some of the bands on the CD. —Kurt Morris (muzairecords.com)

## BATTLE FOR COOPER-YOUNG, \$4, 7½" x 5", color printed, 29 pgs.

The Cooper-Young neighborhood is in Memphis, Tenn. Evidently it has turned from being ■ blighted place to becoming the "hip" hood, being home to many shops, bars, and Goner Records. More recently there have been crime issues in Cooper-Young. In response, a neighborhood watch was re-established and the idea was floated to install digital cameras around stop signs in the neighborhood. Artist and local resident Nick Canterucci had some concerns with this and made ■ number of avant-garde posters that shared these thoughts. This is all a long-winded way to describe what the content of this zine is: images of posters made by Canterucci to get people to think about their need for security. There are many references to Big Brother and the Soviet state, as well ■ Hitler. Next to the images of the posters Canterucci gives some thoughts and his inspiration for them. In that sense, this zine is somewhat like an art exhibit. I tend to prefer simpler, direct messages in my art protest posters and found that many of these were too busy. Yet, I still respect Canterucci for what he did and think this is ■ good testament to ■ particular time and experience in Memphis's history. That said, it's more likely those familiar with the neighborhood or the situation in Cooper-Young will find this most appealing. —Kurt Morris (Nick Canterucci, 2264 Elzey Ave., Memphis, TN 38104)

## CAT PARTY #1: FIVE TRUE CAT STORIES, \$2, 5½" x 8½", copied 30 pgs.

My heaviest involvement with blogging ■■■■ at the ■■■■ time I had started playing fantasy league baseball. You guessed it: post after post about how the Expletive Greys had fared. I had a great time writing about my fantasy team—but when I look back on the writing, I'm bored silly, even though I was writing about my own team. I mention my fantasy blogging because this zine excerpts passages from author Katie Haegle's forthcoming book of cat stories. I'm ■ cat person—I'll take this opportunity to mention that a photo of my cat Spippy in a Razorcake bandana graced the pages of our previous issue—but none of these stories resonated with me. Cats are great, internet cat videos ■■ great—and stories about cats might be relegated to the same space as blogging about fantasy baseball. —Michael T. Fournier (Microcosm, 2752 N. Williams Ave., Portland, OR 97227)

## COPING SKILLS: TOOLS TO FEEL BETTER WITHOUT FUCKING

AROUND, \$3, 4" x 5½", 19 pgs.

Dr. Faith G. Harper has a slew of these lil' self-help buddy zines. I've read three of them and they're good. She avoids jargon and talks clearly about ways to, uh, deal with, in this case, stress and anxiety. Harper starts by noting some of the science behind stress. Our bodies release "the stress hormone cortisol" when we're anxious, and cortisol helps in moderation, but the body won't pump us that juicy full-cort juice long-term. Without it, our chronic stress leads to "exhaustion, body aches, weird skin discolorations" and other quiet miseries. Noooooo. And so, the rest of the zine is ■ collection of coping strategies that Harper has gathered from other smart people. Here's a line I liked: "Treat yourself like you would your best friend." That's profound and easy to apply. Then again, I'm partial to stuff like this because I'm an anxious Jimbo. If you are, too, and you don't have a therapist like me, maybe you can spend three dollars on this here zine. —Jim Joyce (Microcosm, 2752 N Williams Ave., Portland, OR 97227)

## DEFRIENDING: NAVIGATING THE FRIENDSHIP BREAKUP,

\$5, 5½" x 8½", copied, 24 pgs.

This is part of the Dr. Faith's Five Minute Therapy series from Faith G. Harper, PhD. Essentially, it's an advice zine on how to cope with losing friends over dumb things. The writing, though well intentioned, is at times obnoxious, and tries too hard to be cool and down with you, the reader. I found myself skipping ahead, and then suddenly I was finished. I then jumped onto Facebook and blocked and deleted a long list of people who I found to be absolutely repugnant, and I felt much better. —Matt Average (Microcosm, microcosmpublishing.com)

## EARTH FIRST! JOURNAL, Vol. 37, No. 3, 8" x 10½", newsprint, 72 pgs.

Don't forget—lots and lots of hard work is being done all over the world to save the earth! Whether it's big, ongoing actions against oil pipelines and defending old growth, to sharks being freed in Mexico by the Animal Liberation Front, this is the go-to source for this information. There's an article on the Białowieża Forest action in Europe, in which, the writer, as ■ anarchist, is critical of liberal organizers' failure to address politics or capitalism as inherent to the problem of logging. They would rather blame and vilify a certain politician, as if the problem weren't larger and systematic. There's ■ piece on the Matthole Forest Campaign to save old growth forest in Northern California. I'm partial to the interviews, like the one with Elise Gerhart at Camp White Pine, who's set up ■ treesit to protect her own family's home from a big oil pipeline. The best thing in here is the interview with Ruby and Jessica who sabotaged the DAPL and then took credit for it! Now that takes courage! —Craven Rock (Earth First! Journal, PO Box 964, Lake Worth, FL 33460)

## FEAR, SAFETY, AND FEMMES, \$5, 5½" x 7½", pink copied zine, 18 pgs.

*Fear, Safety, and Femmes* is ■ compilation zine themed around what makes ■■ feel safe and what makes us feel as though we are in danger. Which places and people make ■■ feel safe, and why? Which places and people give us a fear or cause for danger? The different submissions ranged from people who are afraid of empty locations (streets where people aren't around), people who feel unsafe if they're in a place with "too many straight white dudes," or how to read someone who comes off ■■ aggressive in their language or gestures. There was an overwhelmingly common theme from the submissions that sounded like most of them are afraid of the unknown and places they aren't familiar with, which was interesting but made me feel a little bit sad. The things that made ■ lot of the writers feel safe seemed to be bustling and familiar cities, smiling faces, and friendly people—which I understand—but also makes me wonder what danger and fear are to most people, and how much of it is a constructed narrative that we've been fed. I would like to see ■ part two of this zine where all the submissions ■■ from men or male-identifying writers to see what places and people make them feel safe or in danger. —Tricia Ramos (catherinettezine@gmail.com, viceversapress.com)



**HAPPY LONER, THE #7, \$3 5½" x 8½",** copied, 14 pgs.

I hadn't read *The Happy Loner* before, but it's done by a Canadian woman named Izalixe, who writes in a free-flowing, diary manner. It's a short issue but engaging. This issue is from early 2017 and Izalixe writes of the change from the shit-awful year that was 2016 and her hopes for 2017. She also describes trying to get around in Quebec in the winter using a taxi after throwing out her back. It's actually much more interesting than I'm making it sound. The ink used in the photocopying process came off on my fingers, and not in that endearing, *Maximum Rock'n'roll* way. But otherwise this was a simple, quick read that I would've enjoyed reading more of. —Kurt Morris (Izalixe Straightheart, 30 rue Ste-Ursule #77, Quebec, QC G1R 4E3, Canada)

**HAPPY LONER, THE #8, \$3/\$4, 5½" x 8½",** copied, 28 pgs.

This issue of *The Happy Loner* finds Izalixe having moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, from Quebec. Once again, this is a perzine format with content written from the middle part of 2017. Material includes Izalixe's adventures in Vancouver, traveling to Seattle and Portland, and getting hired to work for VIA Rail. She takes a short trip to Squamish, BC, and explains all the things to do there and what she enjoys about this small, quaint city. Izalixe is like a very free spirit, which can be fun to read about, but she often writes of people and situations in a way that causes the reader to feel outside the circle. I often had questions about this boyfriend of hers, some of her friends, et cetera. It didn't take away from my overall interest in the zine, but it's something to

**MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL #416, \$4.99, 8½" x 11½",** newsprint, 103 pgs.

This issue begins with a eulogy for Dead Moon's Fred Cole. My favorite part of it—aside from author Erin Yanke's point that "death is a part of the deal with being alive"—was the anecdote about Fred Cole working in music stores. Apparently, he had a habit of giving customers ridiculous credit when it came to buying instruments they probably couldn't afford. The interview with comic artist Liz Prince is spiffy, too. When she's not grinding out the good stuff for *Razorcake*, Liz puts out books like *Be Your Backing Band*. What could she do without? Dorks asking her how to get their unpracticed work published in a snap. One cannot just pick up a pencil and get a graphic novel deal with Scholastic in no time. As Prince says, "years of working in comics in obscurity" and "doing a bunch of different kinds of work" is way more important than hurrying art and chasing popularity. That's not hating on DIY, that's holding folks to trying it. We also hear from punks abroad: the band Kenny Kenny Oh Oh of Leipzig mention how the punk scene in Germany is behind U.S. in terms of being down with "gender and queerness" and racial diversity, while Zay of Yokkaichi, Japan say that their song "There Is No Future in Dreaming of the Past" is critical of punk band reunions. To them, it's like old groups copy their past selves, which is sad. Are they saying they wouldn't pay forty bucks to see Raygun play a bar in Wrigleyville? Maybe. Maybe not. "We just have to believe in what we can't see," singer Gori notes, as if to say, *Move forward, sailor*. Trust yourself to make good new shit, even when there's no promise we'll be celebrated for it. Another good'n! —Jim Joyce (Maximum Rock'n'roll, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146-0760, maximumrocknroll.com)

Here's a line I liked: "Treat yourself like you would your best friend." That's profound and easy to apply.

Life Is Posers | LIFEPOSERS.COM | SKILLS, TIPS, TRICKS TO FEEL BETTER WITHOUT FUCKING AROUND

take note of when writing personal experiences. I think there's a line that I be had between writing about one's personal experiences and also making sure others feel included. Still, this issue has stronger writing and more diversity than the last one, so if you're going to choose, I'd start here. —Kurt Morris (Izalixe Straightheart, PO Box 99101, Davie PO, Vancouver BC, V6G 1V0, Canada)

#### LEFT HANDED CHRISTIANITY,

8¼" x 5½", copied, 7 pgs. (and three pages of mail art)

A short pamphlet that discusses subversive Christianity of the sort practiced by William Blake and the Process Church. Way short, but interesting. Included in the envelope was a one pager titled, *Albany: Are Those Tulips in Your Shoes?*, which recommends radical anarchists work within the system: "You don't have to quit the Green Party. Of course not, you can even run for local office while distributing Crimethinc literature." Okay, sure, but then he goes on to say, "Why not a Police Collective?" and suggests, "Maybe you can fight racism by joining the Klan? Work within the system, right?" Now that last question he poses suggests that this might be sarcasm, but it's really hard to tell. Or if it is. If it's not, that's just downright fucked up. Fortunately, I have some familiarity with the author's work, and I have a feeling it's failed satire and it's not asking anarchists to organize the pigs. Jason Rodgers tends to send out an envelope containing a number of loose pages of collage, brief essays, and political fliers. If this sounds interesting to you, send him a buck. You'll probably get a whole different lot than I did. Just ask him not to include the *Albany* one. —Craven Rock (Jason Rodgers, PO Box 10894, Albany, NY 12201)

#### LIFE IS POSERS: INFLAMMABLE METROPOLIS,

\$6, 7" x 8½", copied, 66 pgs.

This omnibus of loosely serialized comic strips follows the exploits and hijinks of a crew of gutter punk burnouts in the punk-themed town of Poserton, USA. Storylines involve a highly anticipated reunion show, a legendary batch of acid, a lot of kinda-almost-still-relevant jokes about punk culture, and attempted time travel? I'm not sure; it's all kind of a jumble. This sort of hyper-punk throwback genre always reads like a parody of itself to me, but it's at least partly intentional—these comics want to be obnoxious and in-your-face, basically a print version of *The Casualties*. Your odds of enjoying *Life Is Posers* probably directly correlate with the frequency with which you use the phrase "lowbrow art" in your day-to-day life. The highlights of this zine are the trove of small-print punk puns buried in the background every few pages, and the line "Are you planning to mosh? I will only mosh if they play songs from their first compact disc." —Indiana Laub (Life Is Posers, lifeisposers.com)

**MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL #418, \$4.99, 8½" x 11",** newsprint, 104 pgs.

After having written for *Razorcake* for thirteen years and having read *Maximum Rock'n'roll* for over twenty years, I can't help but wonder if there have been punks who seriously and ferociously debate which of these two fine publications is better. For me, they both cover a number of bands I've never heard of, and with music reviews that can be snarky. One of the big differences is with the columns. Those in *MRR* have always been more political, whereas *Razorcake* has Rhythm Chicken. *Razorcake* is bi-monthly, whereas *MRR* is somehow capable of putting out a zine every month. Also, one hundred percent newsprint vs. ninety-eight percent newsprint. These are some good starting points for any of you punks who want to debate this. Oh yeah, and this issue of *Maximum Rock'n'roll* has interviews with Martha, Snob, Mauradeur, Neo Neos, Senyawa, F.I.T.S., ISS, Eric Bifaro, Not On Tour, and more! There's also all the other good stuff: columns, reviews, letters to the editor, et cetera. As always, worth picking up if you're into bands you've likely never heard of and enjoy the smell of newsprint. —Kurt Morris (Maximum Rock'n'roll, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146)

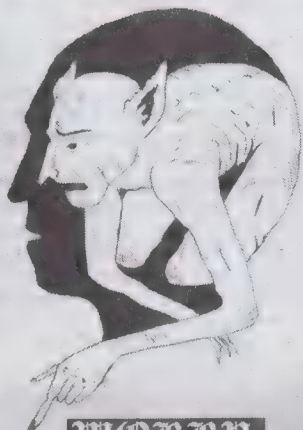
#### MIDLIFE CRISIS #1,

\$4 ppd. Canada, \$5 ppd. rest of N. America, 8½" x 11", 32 pgs.

This Toronto-centered zine includes a two-part interview with OAF from 2016. The first part is with the singer Tony and guitarists Jakob and Damon from before the band broke up, and the second is with their bassist Cera from a few months later. The band recordings are decent sludgy hardcore, but the interview points out that the band had a bit of multi-generational punk rock legacy as the guitarist Damon is the son of Black Flag's Ron Reyes. There's also a fun, quick interview with NoMeansNo from 1988. I feel very lucky to have gotten to see the band twice before their breakup in 2016, as they are one of the most awesome weirdo anomalies to emerge from Canada—and probably some of the most intense musicians I have ever seen even on stage. (I remember Rob Wright played so hard during a song that perspiration got into the electronics of his bass and shorted it out. He switched the bass out mid-song and the rest of the band never lost a beat). The zine also has an interview with punk record store owner Pete Genest, who was like a punk Johnny Appleseed, opening stores such as Roundhouse records in Portland, Singles Going Steady in Seattle, and Hits and Misses in Toronto. A review of the 2012 documentary *She Said Boom: The Story of Fifth Column* rounds out the zine. I've never heard of the band but they somehow emerged out of the early 1980s in Toronto to be important progenitors of the riot grml and queercore scenes. Overall, this is a standard interview zine, but the author Daragh Hayes approaches things from an enthusiastic place that makes this an enjoyable read. —Adrian Salas (Daragh Hayes, 250 Pall Mall Street, Unit 601, London, ON, Canada, N6A 6K3, midlifecrisiserahc@gmail.com)



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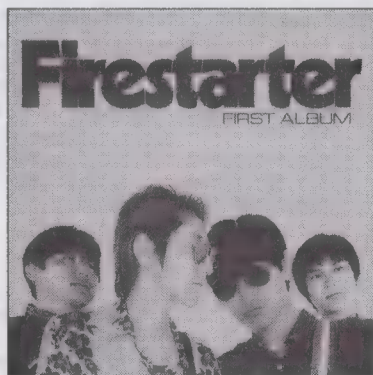
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MIDLIFE CRISIS #1, \$5, 8½" x 11", copied, 32 pgs.

It's nice, and sadly ■■■ these days, to read ■ hardcore punk zine where the editor doesn't ■ himself (and it's always ■ male) as another blowhard Lester Bangs with fake attitude and flimsy knowledge. The editor, Daragh Hayes, keeps his writing honest; his enthusiasm and passion for all things hardcore punk is undeniable. He covers the new, as well ■ the old, with interviews from OAF and one with NoMeansNo from 1988, as well as a talk with Pete Genest from the Hits and Misses record store. There's also a lengthy review on the doc *She Said Boom: The Story of Fifth Column*. There needs to be more zines like this. Please! —Matt Average (Daragh Hayes, 250 Pall Mall Street, Unit 601, London, ON, Canada, N6A 6K3, midlifecrisiserahc@gmail.com)

MINIMUM ROCK + ROLL, 5½" x 4¼", copied, 6 pgs.

Music zine that is far too short to connect to. The four-question interview with SOAR was far too brief to be engaging. The eight, sixty-word record reviews, well, they were fine, I guess. It's just that I read this thing in less than five minutes. There ■■■ nothing to grasp. I got no feel for the zine-maker's voice. —Craven Rock (No address listed)

MINOR LEAGUES #5, \$7 8½" x 11", copied, 59 pgs.

I was kind of hoping this would be a zine about minor league baseball, but instead it's partially ■ perzine and partially comics (well, mainly comics). The

lived about ■ dozen different lives. Cottrell hung out with the Grateful Dead in '69, got drafted, got out, studied poetry at Oxford in the '70s, got pretty into fireworks in Tulsa, came back to New Orleans, roasted a few doobers here and there, and lived to tell the tale. I like learning about new groups and I enjoy the record reviews, but I really loved this informal profile on ■ longtime NOLA punker. I could read stuff like that for days. Thanks, Bobby! Hope you're feeling good as new again soon, too. —Jim Joyce (Paranoize, PO Box 2334, Marrero, LA 70073-2334, bobby@paranoizenola.com)

PICKING STUFF APART No. 1 (?), \$4 or trade, 5½" x 8½", copied, 48 pgs.

The numbering has ■ off because this zine is also technically #8 of Craven Rock's *Eaves of Ass* and #11 of Joshua James Amberson's *Basic Paper Airplane*. Cataloging irregularity aside, I loved this zine. The concept is that Craven and Joshua James assigned each other several things to review—such ■ books, music or events—and then had ■ back and forth conversational interview over the hows and whys of each review. The results are ten reviews which range far and wide, such as an awkward industrial music awards show, ■ teen-aimed, satanic-panic-fueled Christian variety show from the early '90s, ■ modernist book club called Joyce Division, and an EP of what Craven comes to label "busyfolk." At first blush, I assumed reviewing a zine of reviews would be ■ exercise in meta-tedium, but each review ends up functioning as a springboard for an interesting essay which each writer uses to explore ideas related to their subject at hand, even if, at times, their lack of expertise

The pre-internet years, when every album one could get a hold of was an object of intense study because of scarcity... even if you didn't particularly like it.

—Adrian Salas | PICKING STUFF APART No. 1

content includes writing about ghosts, some genealogy of people who lived in the author's house, and walking in the woods. I really like Simon's writing. It's very simple, but also visual. That's ■ good way to describe his comics, too. They're so bare it can at times be difficult to understand the scene, but it also caused me to pause and really contemplate them. That said, there are extraneous drawings and photographs in this issue that don't have anything to do with the rest of the content. I would have loved to read more of Simon's words in place of those, but I'm still interested in seeing future issues of *Minor Leagues*. —Kurt Morris (smoo-comics.com)

MUSICA OBSCURA, \$6, 5½" x 8½", printed zine with CD, 62 pgs.

This zine and CD two-piece collects Adel Souto's favorite essays they wrote while being featured on the music website No Echo. The music featured on the CDs span from punk or offshoots of punk, disco hits by adult stars, lost Cambodian rock, and ■■■ painful ■■■■ tracks. The essays themselves range from murders in darker genres, Hollywood and the adult industry, awful mixed music genres, Communist Cuba, breakfast cereal, cults, and heck of a lot of other things. Pretty interesting essays and ■ huge companion CD (with a link to downloadable MP3s if you don't have a disc drive). —Tricia Ramos (Musica Obscura, adelsouto.com)

OWNING THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION: THE STORY OF THE JEFFERSON PEOPLE'S HOUSE, \$6, 4¼" x 7", copied, 90 pgs.

Offering "pocket lessons for your own worker co-op" is what this zine does. That's not something I see myself doing in my ■■■ future, so I'm not really the audience for this zine. Reading it as if I were its intended audience, I found some of it would probably be useful info; ■■■ of it was pretty obvious and left ■ thinking, well, duh. —Craven Rock (Microcosm Publishing, 2752 N Williams Ave., Portland, OR 97227, microcosmpublishing.com)

PARANOIZE #42, free, 5½" x 8½", 16 pgs.

Bobby Bergeron—the baron from the city of Zapp chips and Fats Domino, the zinebobster nearest Nicholas Cage's pyramid grave—brings ■ *Paranoize* #43, ■ brief New Orleans scene report. The bad news is Bobby recently had a burst appendix. The good ■■■ is he's rocking back to proper zine-printing health. Back at it, Bobby brings us a list of local groups to check out and ■■■ brief record reviews. My favorite is for Bloodsick's new release: "Bloodsick has cooked up a steaming pot of blackened thrash with ■ side of doom to fill them earholes with pure insanity!!!" But the bulk of the thing goes to Curtis Cottrell, "a huge contributor supporter of the New Orleans underground scene," who has

■ their actual "object of study" is quite substantial. For instance, when assigned the posthumous EP *Chokes!* by the band Silkworm, Craven is able to use the middle of the road review of the actual album—to which he has no real attachment or connection—as ■ platform for examining how his music consumption methods have drastically changed since the pre-internet years, when every album one could get a hold of was an object of intense study because of scarcity... even if you didn't particularly like it. The back and forth interviews afterward ■ great too, as both writers are particularly articulate in examining the thought processes they used to reach their opinions and asking questions of each other that move the conversation deeper. —Adrian Salas (Craven Rock, 10511 Phinney Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98133, eavesofass@yahoo.com, antiquatedfuture.com)

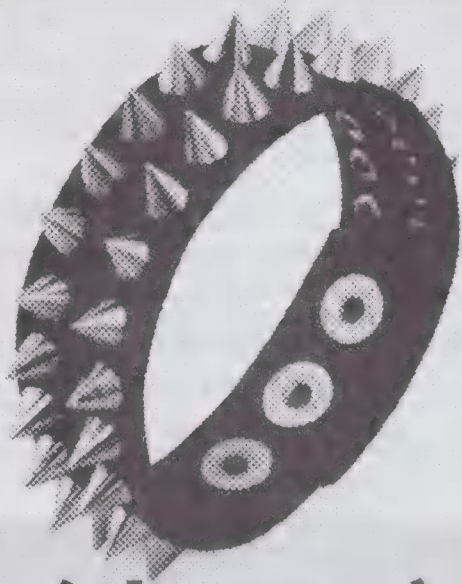
PICKING STUFF APART, \$4, 5½" x 8½", copied, 48 pgs.

*Picking Stuff Apart* is ■ brainchild between two friends who assigned each other things to watch, read, and listen to, and then wrote reviews of experiences of those things and then discuss it, and, well—pick stuff apart. Assignment topics include Grant Morrison's essay/manifesto "Pop Magic!," listening to ■ discussion from *The New Yorker Fiction Podcast*, Alak's 2009 EP *I Don't Feel Anything*, and my personal favorite, ■ Christian television show *Fire By Nite* "Satanism Unmasked: The Return 1," where Craven muses, "A lot of people are completely repulsed by Christian propaganda, but it's endless entertainment for others. I guess I'm just gloating, but, in this case, at people who definitely deserve to fail." Topics of discussions weren't always of interest, however the back and forth discussions between zinesters Joshua and Craven is insightful, snarky and intelligent. —Carnylle Reynolds (Craven Rock, 10511 Phinney Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98133)

SEX WITHOUT ROLES, \$4, 5½" x 8½", copied, 34 pgs.

I really want to be open and kind to others who are not my background (cis, upper-middle class, white male). Having not grown up around trans people, I know I have a lot to learn. That's why I appreciate reading zines like *Sex without Roles*, written by Eli Sasche, a transman. Eli covers ■ range of topics related to the trans community, including sex, flirting and dating, consent, long-term relationships, and sex with changing body parts. It's not overly thorough, but it's still ■ good primer for ■■■■ like myself to get a bit of insight into what the concerns are for trans people around the issue of sex. I realize this is just Eli's point of view, but considering how limited my take is ■ trans issues, I'm thankful for any introduction. If you're as unaware of this community as I am, or if you want to just read the experiences of one trans person and sex, I think this is worth checking out. —Kurt Morris (Microcosm Publishing, 2752 N. Williams Ave., Portland, OR 97227)





(sheena)

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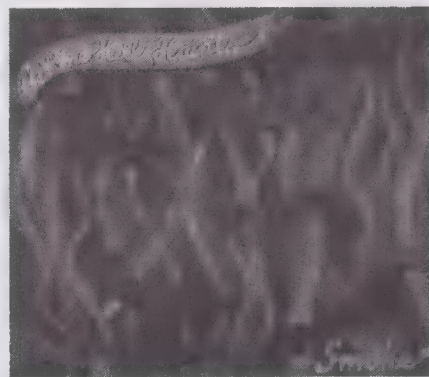


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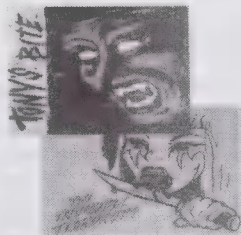
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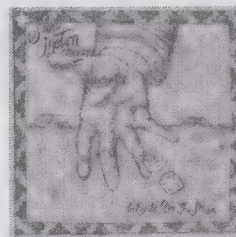
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**SOMETHING FOR NOTHING**, 2 stamps or trade, 5½" x 8½", copied, 22 pgs. *Something for Nothing* is packed tight in tiny, but still readable, font with a plethora of personal musings that run the gamut from tasty new snacks, newest or revisited tunes, show adventures from the fresh eyes of a forty-four-year-old, and a most thorough review of *The English Beat* because why the hell not. But I'll be honest, the best part of this zine is the Beverage Reviews of new fab Snapples, coconut waters, and fruit-infused thirst quenchers, because that shit is crucial. This zine was a fun, light-hearted read. —Camylle Reynolds (Idy, PO Box 226, Massillon, OH, 44646)

**STANDING UNAFAID: HEALING TRAUMA WITH EDMR THERAPY**, \$4, 4¼" x 5½", copied, 62 pgs.

I've always been a fan of Robert Wildwood's (AKA Robnoxious) writing. There's always an honesty and optimism to it. You'll find the same tone here with his zine about his experiences with EDMR therapy. EDMR is a kind of therapy where you're guided into your past by a therapist who instructs you to make peace with it, restructuring stories in a way that allows the abused child of your past to rest. As a child, Rob was a survivor of brutal bullying. His serious PTSD made living really difficult. He describes an incident where he was triggered by losing his glasses and it made him just freak out. In total fight or flight mode, he fought people, hit himself over the head with a brick, and jumped out a window when it was closed. It was this level of anxiety that made

**THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON ANGER: WHAT IT IS, HOW TO DEAL**, \$5, 5½" x 8½", copied, 32 pgs.

Another installment of the Dr. Faith's Five Minute Therapy series from the one and only Faith G. Harper, PhD. Do you have problems with anger? Need to get a grip? Well, this zine hopes it can aid you in your quest for inner peace. As for me, I read it, put on my Sid Vicious T-shirt, then walked outside and punched two parents who walked past me with smiles pushing their newborn in a carriage. That'll teach them! No one smiles at me unless I say it's okay! I then shoved the carriage out into traffic, because fuck that kid, and who are they to be sucking up my precious oxygen? Some do-gooder type decided to stick his nose into my affairs, so I head butted the motherfucker when he told me I needed "to chill." Fuck off, you twat! Me gets angry and me acts out! I can't help it, and keeping it bottled up will only make me sick, so I have to let 'er rip! Me is punk rock and all that. Peace and happiness is for middle class wankers and dirty stupid hippies. Me down here in the streets where me anger keeps me warm like an electric blanket. —Matt Average (Microcosm, microcosmpublishing.com)

**THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON DEPRESSION**, \$4, 5½" x 8½", copied, 17 pgs.

Almost everyone nowadays struggles with depression. But is it depression in the sense that it's a genetic neurochemical disorder, or are you just bummed out more often than not? If this is something that's been on your mind, *This Is Your Brain on Depression* is a good, quick info resource for you. One in a series

Pick it up and get inspired to live like a maniac. Get a crazy tattoo across your forehead and stagedive to a hardcore band! Rock'n'roll forever!

—Daryl | TATTOO PUNK #1

him seek help in EDMR therapy and it really helped. It's a great zine if you aren't looking for mental help, but if you are, it might point you in the right direction. —Craven Rock (Microcosm Publishing, 2752 N Williams Ave., Portland, OR 97227, microcosmpublishing.com)

**subTERRAIN #78**, 6" x 9", \$7, printed, 96 pgs.

This is the third or fourth issue of this fantastic Canadian lit zine that I've read. It's always a quality read, and usually revolves around some sort of theme. This issue is no exception on either front, though the concept this time is less thematic and more about quality: the bulk of the prose and poetry herein have won various awards, making this issue especially great read. If you haven't jumped onboard yet, I can't think of a better place to start. Hell of recommended, eh? —Michael T. Fournier (PO Box 3008, Main Post Office, Vancouver, BC V6B 3X5, Canada)

**TATTOO PUNK #1**, \$10, full color, 8½" x 11", 40 pgs.

From the mastermind behind *Nuts!* fanzine and *Rock'n'roll Forever* comes *Tattoo Punk*. It's a full color mag that's loaded with interviews with tattoo artists and tons of pictures of tattoos and tattooed people. So much of it is hand done, which gives it a personal, journal-like feel. It just all makes punk, tattoos, and New York City look so goddamn fun. Pick it up and get inspired to live like a maniac. Get a crazy tattoo across your forehead and stagedive to a hardcore band! Rock'n'roll forever! —Daryl (Tattoo Punk c/o Nuts! Fanzine, PO Box 1959, NY, NY 10013)

**THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON ADDICTION: WHERE THEY COME FROM AND HOW WE HEAL**, \$4, 5½" x 8½", 15 pgs.

I thought a lot about Crimpshrine's "Wake Up" while reading *This Is Your Brain on Addiction* because, as Jeff Ott says, "...everyone's addicted to something" and "it's OK as long as you feel love inside," which is true. But also, there's a lot of stuff that doesn't get done when one's addicted. Like mopping the floor, seeing your friends, getting to work on time, and doing anything that's not a part of bending the day to meet the addiction itself. Harper does a good job of explaining where the condition can come from—sometimes it's a "coping skills gone awry"—how they work, and how one can go about taking their life back, however incrementally, from that behavior or substance. This zine might be helpful for those who are suffering from the condition, but it humanizes addiction for unfamiliar readers, too. Zines like this will probably lead to more conversations around the topic, which in turn might mean less loneliness and less shame and more compassion and help, which would be awesome. —Jim Joyce (Microcosm, 2752 N Williams Ave., Portland, OR 97227)

from "Dr. Faith's Five Minute Therapy" zines, this is a quick read for anyone who wants to identify if what they're going through is depression, and if so how to address it. Dr. Faith lists out the different types of depression (or mood disorders), the science and causes behind what is happening in our minds, and western medicine versus naturopathic medicine. It's a good beginner's resource for anyone who needs help and is unsure where to look for it. —Tricia Ramos (microcosmpublishing.com)

**TO RUIN AND REDEEM: HOW TO BUILD A CONSTRUCTIVE MINDSET IN PRISON**, \$5, 4¼" x 7", copied, 40 pgs.

Advice zine (Is this a new thing in the zine world? This is one of three I was assigned this month) from a man who is doing time in a Florida prison for making a string of bad choices. He gives you the back story on how he arrived at where he is; then goes into how prison has forced him to face himself; and then what he would like to do upon release. He doesn't pull any of the tough guy *Scared Straight* act, or dwell on the what ifs. He just handles it and gives it to you straight. One must ask themselves: are they living the chaos, or is the chaos living them? —Matt Average (Microcosm, microcosmpublishing.com)

**TRUST #186**, €3, 8" x 11½", 66 pgs.

We've got another beautiful issue of *TRUST*, the second-longest running punk zine out there after *MRR*, as far as I know. My usual routine with *TRUST* is to flip through quickly while looking for any signs of English (a Crass quote here, a generous *Razorcake* issue #99 review there, (thanks!)), then I go back to page one and drool over the layout and photos. Issue #186 features an interview with Alice Bag, and it begins with, yes, a photo of a paper lunch bag. She's probably used to that gag by now, but visual puns and the like speak to the zine's humor and style. The pages are drenched in black ink, as if the zine were crafted by a renegade crew of pallid monk typographers and photographers who'd committed themselves to the study of punk as it appears in basement lighting. Clearly, I find grimy beauty of this magnitude intoxicating. Aside from all that gushing, though, I should say this issue also features interviews with Penny Rimbaud, Lebenden Toten, Zonenpunk, and fuzz rockers Sneeze Attack, a group who I'm into now. Thanks, *TRUST*! —Jim Joyce (Trust, Verlag, Postfach 11 07 62, 28087 Bremen, Germany, trust-zine.de)







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# BOOK REVIEWS



Collected Writings: Life Sex Fandom

By Johnnie Jungleguts. 212 pgs.

I admit to being initially put off by this one: A quick flip through revealed a ton of blank space, which I thought didn't bode well for the content, especially after realizing some of the author's collected musings are culled from Facebook. But! After only a few pages my mind was changed. The author is a gamer (actually, a "gaymer"—I looked it up!), a fanboy and an essayist, among other things. It's this broad palette that gives Johnnie's writing such impact: A book of funny statuses from Facebook would quickly be relegated to a novelty. But these provide quick blasts of levity amongst essays about the author's volunteer work on a Bolivian animal

dry periods when Lake Mead has retreated enough to expose the remains of the town's streets and foundations. He has not been back to the town site since the day in 1938 when he and his Grandpa, the elder Henry Lord, loaded up a boat from the family home's front porch and burned down the house on their way out of town.

The elder Henry, a mechanic in St. Thomas, is based on the real final resident of St. Thomas. In the book he is the patriarch to a family that includes his son Thomas, Thomas's wife Ellen, and the younger Henry. Grandpa Henry is a reserved, caring man, but also intensely stubborn and resistant to change. The submersion of St. Thomas was not a quick event, but rather a gradual death that began in the 1920s when the first surveys and land purchases began to occur for the eventual dam. Many of the events that play out in the novel stem from Henry's refusal to acknowledge the impending change in his family's life the rising lake will bring, regardless of his protestations and willful denial. While Henry's stubbornness in the face of the inevitable forces of nature, time, and the government does have a bit of admirable underdog scrappiness in its Quixotic nature, the willful blindness and unyielding nature he goes about battling the (literal and figurative) tides of change, unfortunately ripples out in ways that fatally affect his family.

Ellis crafts a story that often brings to mind parts of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Both stories focus on child characters who are living out their last days of idyllic innocence under the pall of a force bigger than themselves, soon to settle on their lives and change them irrevocably. Although this is a book marked by heavy loss, it is nonetheless still a refreshing read. —Adrian Salas (Green Writers Press, 139 Main St., Suite 501, Brattleboro, VT, 05301)

Make a Zine

By Joe Biel with Bill Brent, 158 pgs.

This is the twentieth anniversary of *Make a Zine*, now on its third edition. The book is, theoretically, about starting "your own underground publishing revolution" (that's the subtitle). Throughout the book author Joe Biel shares his experience of creating his first zine and coming up in that community, as well as lessons he's learned. In addition, there are some good nuts and bolts material here: organization, layout and type, postage, distribution, et cetera. However, those foundational issues of

It's this broad palette that gives Johnnie Jungleguts' writing such impact: quick blasts of levity amongst essays about the author's volunteer work on a Bolivian animal refuge, witchcraft, and his twenty-four consecutive hours playing Final Fantasy VII.

—Michael T. Fournier | Collected Writings: Life Sex Fandom

refuge, witchcraft, and his twenty-four consecutive hours playing Final Fantasy VII. The blank space he leaves on some pages just emphasizes the heft of his longer prose pieces. The sum of these disparate pieces is a deeply personal reflection of identity. Thoroughly entertaining throughout as he pinballs from subject to subject, with absurd humor a strong hook to pull in skeptics and acolytes. A complete trip, and well worth seeking out. —Michael T. Fournier (Closing, closingstore.bigcartel.com)

Lords of St. Thomas

By Jackson Ellis, 180 pgs.

Sometimes a quick, straight-forward book hits the right nerve. *Lords of St. Thomas* can easily be finished in two or three sittings, but author Jackson Ellis's simple prose is evocative. It makes an impact in the short time one spends with it. This book is written as a piece of historical fiction based on the real town of St. Thomas, Nev. which existed from the 1860s in the Mojave Desert's Moapa Valley up until the 1930s when the construction of the Hoover Dam eventually covered the town with Lake Mead. The plot centers around the Lord family—whose story is told in a flashback by the youngest member "Little" Henry Lord. Henry is in his mid-seventies and going back to his hometown during one of the periodic

how to create a zine are all in the second half of the book. The first half is a mishmash of random things, including the history of publishing, zines and the corporate world, libel, copyright, and zine communities. The last one really tripped me up. It came off as overly negative with zinesters airing their grievances about the community they supposedly loved so much. If I were someone just getting into zines, after reading that chapter I'm not sure I'd want to be any part of that community.

I did appreciate the range of individuals who chimed in throughout the book, however, including zinesters from wide backgrounds (and our own Todd Taylor). In addition, chapters of *Make a Zine* are written by a few other authors including Katie Haegele, Stephen Duncombe, and Fly. The DIY Comix chapter by Fly was especially good, as it was thorough on every aspect one might want to know on this topic. That's generally how this book runs, though. There are some strong portions that should be essential information to those new to the zine scene. However, the material that is more about the scene and its politics don't seem to mesh well with the sections I believe to be more important. Perhaps the next edition will correct these issues and make it more consistent. —Kurt Morris (Microcosm Publishing, 2752 N. Williams Ave., Portland, OR 97227)



Specious Species, No. 8  
Edited by Joe Donohoe, 204 pgs.

Apocalypse. That's a word that always draws attention. And in the case of volume 8 of Joe Donohoe's literary journal series, it is one of the twin themes permeating the course of the book. Specifically, this issue is centered around the topics of islands and apocalypse. At first it seems like these concepts may be a little disparate, but Donohoe pushes the two concepts into a remarkably cohesive whole by using his piece "Hiroshima Mon Amour" to do a deep dive on the history of Japan, eventually leading to the dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Beginning the piece as a travelogue of a trip made to Japan in 2016, Donohoe utilizes great economy by shifting into a historical primer of Japan from its start as a collection as of warring factions under an imperial court all the way up to the Shōwa period, which corresponds to the reign of Emperor Hirohito in World War II. Another complementary narrative thread is a condensed history of the atomic bomb, starting with the discoveries of Niels Bohr. Particular attention is paid to the life of Robert Oppenheimer, who was at once both a learned, progressive humanist and the shepherd of one of the most destructive projects in the history of humankind.

The Japanese subject continues later on in another piece in which Donohoe makes a digest examining the lives and works of six key twentieth century Japanese authors. I admittedly am only familiar with Haruki Murakami, but the figure I found most fascinating—if somewhat scary—is the author of the *Sea of Fertility* tetralogy, Yukio Mishima. Beginning life as a somewhat sickly and effete child, Mishima eventually became a prolific and intensely masterful hard right writer, athlete, and possibly gay man who was obsessed with a return to a militaristic Japan based on the tenets of the samurai code of bushido. Eventually, Mishima took his life in 1970 by seppuku during a bizarrely orchestrated coup attempt by him and some compatriots.

Aside from the Japanese pieces at the heart of the issue, there is also another fascinating travelogue of Donohoe's 2015 trip to Greece and specifically the island of Patmos, where St. John the Divine was said to have dictated the Book of Revelation. Eric Wilcox contributes a good piece about visiting the Anasazi cliff dwellings of Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. Even though I grew up in New Mexico, I have never been to

these sites but now feel like I'm obligated to soon. As a good complement to the recent *Razorcake*, there is also an entertaining interview with Dave Dictor of MDC. Surprisingly, the interview was conducted in May 2016 before Trump won office, so it would be interesting to see how different the tone would have been just seven months later. There are several other short pieces throughout, but the aforementioned sections already make this another really worthwhile read from Donohoe. —Adrian Salas (Specious Species, 3345 20<sup>th</sup> St., SF, CA, 94110)

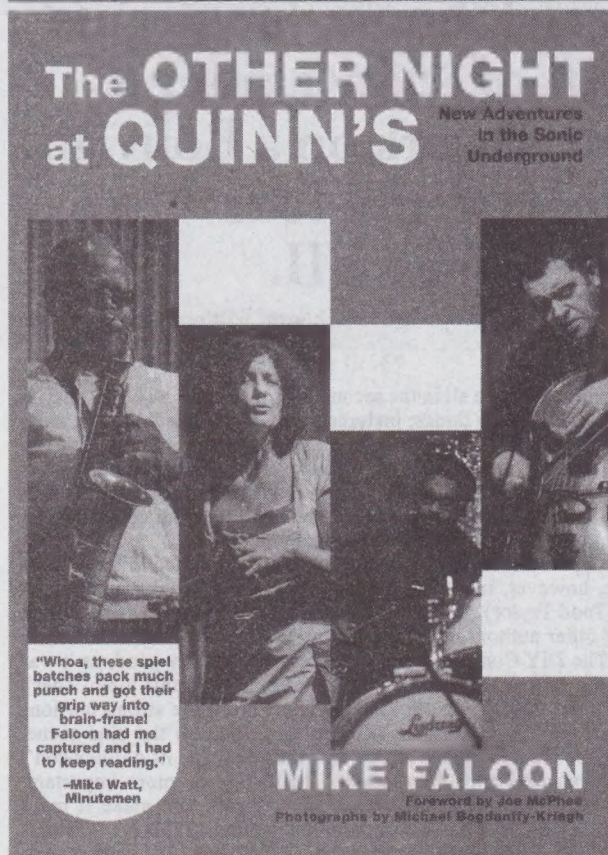
**This Is Memorial Device: An Hallucinated Oral History of the Post-Punk Music Scene in Airdrie, Coatbridge and Environs 1978-1986**

By David Keenan, 304 pgs.

Memorial Device's big break came in 1986 when Sonic Youth requested them as opener for their U.K. tour. Unfortunately, the experimental Scottish post-punk band had already broken up. On the upside, this near-miss preserved Memorial Device's status as unsung heroes in the dying Glasgow suburb of Airdrie, and the memories of the scenesters in this fictional oral history have remained vivid. The first-person accounts have a gravity that'll ring true to anyone who had an epiphany the first time they saw some local kids making feedback onstage.

The local scenesters are all here. The older guy with the good drugs and better records. The sexy, sad couple with the noise band. The hanger-on whose invisibility is wearing on him. Sometimes it's hard to believe that every one of these small-town misfits is so poetic, but it's a pleasure to read and easily succeeds in conveying a little world that is universal in its specificity.

Author David Keenan is an accomplished music writer, and the man behind *England's Hidden Reverse*, a biography of the scene around goth/industrial bands Coil, Current 93, and Nurse With Wound. In *This Is Memorial Device*, he applies his journalistic chops to an impressionistic oral history-style Rashomon that goes for the heart, telling a story that's as much *Please Kill Me* as it is *A Brief History of Seven Killings*. *This Is Memorial Device* should please record geeks looking to branch out from punk history books, and bookworms with a soft spot for music and a love for narrative voice. —Chris Terry (Faber & Faber)



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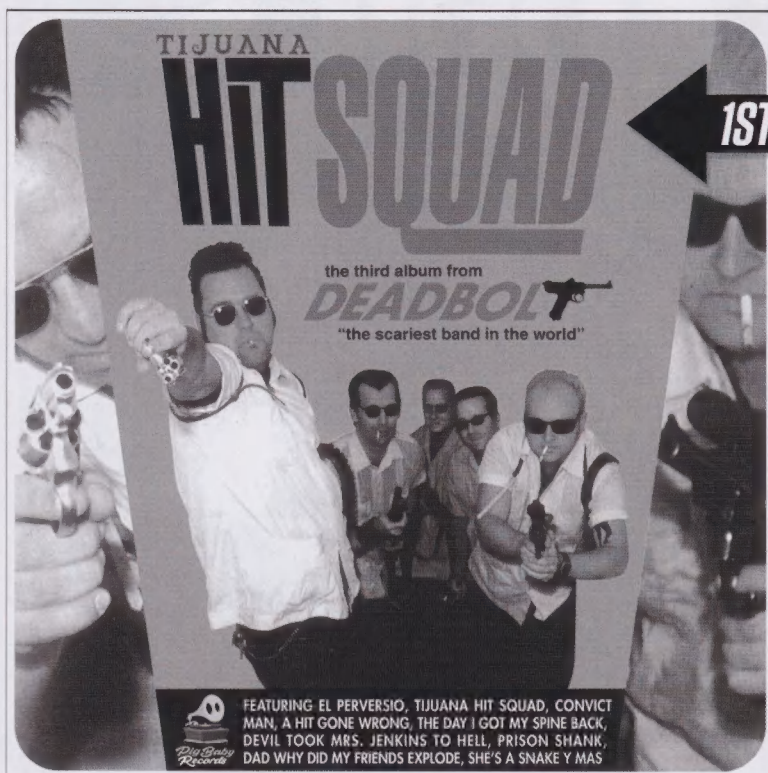
Wayne Kramer of the MC5 adds that it's "...a deeply personal dive into the psyche of a hardcore music fanatic...utterly indispensable. A truly great read."

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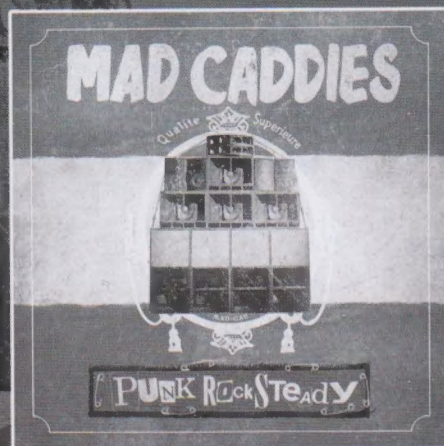


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